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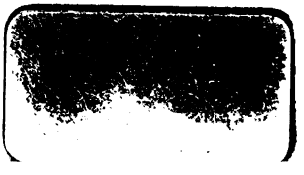

MARTIN TOBIN

A NOVEL

BY

LADY CAMPBELL

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II

LONDON
JOHN MAXWELL AND COMPANY
122, FLEET STREET
M DCCC LXIV

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250. k. 159.

BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA ·

CONTENTS TO VOL. II.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	GOING ACROSS COUNTRY	1
II.	A NATIVE FIGHT	15
III.	A HOME AMONG THE SAVAGES	29
IV.	A SAIL! A SAIL!	42
V.	STORY OF A LOST LIFE	56
VI.	A PISTOL SHOT	79
VII.	SAYING GOOD BYE TO TREVOR	94
VIII.	INTO CIVILIZED LIFE AGAIN	118
IX.	HOPE DEFERRED MAKETH THE HEART SICK	135
X.	ALL OVER	152
XI.	A LITTLE SURPRISE ON WAKING FROM A LONG DREAM	169
XII.	HOW THE LADIES GOT TO LAKE TAUPO	189
XIII.	THE PIBROCH ON LAKE TAUPO	203
XIV.	NEWS FROM ENGLAND	220
XV.	A TERRIBLE REVENGE	238
XVI.	AN ENEMY IN THE CAMP	258
XVII.	I FIND MYSELF A WIFE	278

MARTIN TOBIN.

CHAPTER I.

GOING ACROSS COUNTRY.

The pah of Te Rapa was situated upon a rising ground close to, and commanded a beautiful view of Lake Taupo and the mountain district. Had I been an artist I could have made my fortune, the continual alteration of light gave the landscape all the enchantment of an ever changing scenic view, and every day seemed to open new beauties and wonders. I used to sit for hours gazing at the distant hills, or watching the clouds passing over the clear

surface of the lovely lake which lay embosomed in mountains clothed down to the water's edge with forest trees of every shade.

Although the kauri pine, the monarch of New Zealand forests, is not found so far south, there are hundreds of others almost equalling it in height, and even more luxuriant and beautiful in foliage; and these too are surrounded with an undergrowth of creepers, not a single space is left vacant; every spot is covered by a dense, almost overpowering vegetation, and even the decaying trunks of the forest trees are ornamented with wonderful-looking fungi, some of them a brilliant scarlet, contrasting well with the dark green foliage and decaying wood.

But of all the native trees the fern is the most curious. It grows from twenty to thirty feet in height, throws out a crown of long feathery branches, which sweep down almost to the earth, bending and waving

gracefully with every breath of air, and shedding an aromatic perfume.

I have since writing this visited the Pacific Islands, and seen their far famed ferns, but none are equal to those in New Zealand. There are not many varieties of flowers; but such as there are grow so vigorously, and flower so abundantly, that they make up amply for the loss of variety.

Fruits are rare, but such as are imported. English productions grow wonderfully well, and propagate easily.

At first my time hung rather heavily on my hands; but as I regained my strength, and was able to take excursions into the country, or on the lake, the days passed more rapidly.

Te Heu Heu, the chief, was a fine, handsome fellow, nearly seven feet high, and of magnificent proportions. He had stayed for some weeks at the Missionary station on the Bay of Islands, and was very anxious to

imitate any European custom he could remember. His hut was very neat, it possessed the advantages of a large window, and a chimney, a luxury no one who has not tried a New Zealander's hut can fully appreciate. Besides this he had several articles of dress, which he held in great estimation, and kept in a richly carved tabooed box, only appearing in them upon state occasions.

Tabooing is one of the oldest customs or ceremonies extant among the Polynesian tribes, and where there is no law the taboo has much the same effect, being so strictly observed that the meanest slave or greatest rascal among them would rather die than violate it.

The origin of taboo is obscure; but that it has existed from time immemorial is evident. The meaning of the word is a "rendering sacred;" or, to explain it more fully, making a particular object so holy, that no one can touch it, or sometimes even speak of it. The

power of doing this lies with the chiefs and priests; but many things are tabooed by nature, or time-honoured custom, such as the head, hair, and person of a chief, all that touches him, and all that he passes under; but, indeed, it would be endless to enumerate the objects of the taboo.

I was taboo, and all that belonged to me. At first I was inclined to rejoice in it, as I saw the natives treated me with such marked respect, keeping carefully aloof: but this I soon grew weary of, especially as I found myself constantly watched lest I touched any one or anything, besides not being allowed to feed myself in public, being compelled on these occasions to let Clari put my food into my mouth.

After enduring this state of things as long as I could I went to Te Heu Heu and begged him to take away the taboo; which ceremony he performed this way:—a dish of cooked kumaras were presented, of which he ate a

little, and then cast the rest away as an offering to the attua. Thus was I made free from the taboo, and able to do as I pleased; and the first use I made of my freedom, was to take a bath in the lake, that having been prohibited heretofore.

The lake is quite warm in some parts, in consequence of the number of hot springs that rise, both in the lake and district round about; they are much frequented by sick or ailing natives, who go to bathe in the hot water, and I often saw them cooking their food in these springs; and once or twice found huts built close to them or over them for the sake of the warmth.

Although the occasional use of these mineral baths may be beneficial, the abuse seems to generate the very same class of complaints, which on the other hand they are supposed to cure. There is no doubt but that they possess an almost miraculous effect where there is a

tendency to scrofula. Yet almost all the inhabitants of the district were troubled with such like complaints. Their skin looked shrivelled and leprous, and not one of them had a sound white tooth, a remarkable circumstance, as in every other part of the country the natives have singularly beautiful teeth—does not this savour of the homœopathic doctrine.

Most of the boiling springs are in the district lying between Taupo and Ratora, where they may be said to be most especially concentrated, though they form a broken but easily distinguishable chain all the way from the "White Island" to Wanganui, a distance of nearly two hundred miles. You come upon them in the strangest way and in all directions, sometimes in the dark depths of the forest, sometimes on the dreary plain, sometimes on the mountain, and very often find one bubbling up in the bed of the river.

The largest number in a small space are to be found at Ohivemotu, which will, no doubt, in some future day, and when the inhabitants of the new country find time to think of such things, become a New Zealand Bath, or Tunbridge Wells.

I had a strong idea that in my present emaciated condition I might gain strength by taking a course of these mineral baths. So having obtained Te Heu Heu's permission, and accompanied by Clari and a native guide, I set off upon my pilgrimage. We were ferried across the lake, and landed upon the beautiful white sand at the opposite side.

Our stock of provisions consisted of a few cakes, made of potatoes beat into a paste, and duck eggs boiled hard, a plan of my own, and highly approved by the natives.

A long steep rising ground lay before us covered by a dense forest, and through this we had to toil, even cutting our way in many

places. The heat towards noon-day was dreadful, although not a ray of sunshine penetrated the forest roof above us, and a sort of green twilight was our only light.

After walking or rather climbing and tumbling for about four hours, we came to a halt, and sat down to enjoy our dinner. In New Zealand every valley has a brook in it, the banks of which are a perfect nest of beautiful ferns, and small white flowers, somewhat resembling violets, but not so sweet. Of course we chose one of these brooks to rest by, and its merry tinkling sound lulled me asleep, from which refreshing dose I was roused to drag myself on reluctantly enough.

At night we intended to reach a pah, but somehow the guide, who, I began to suspect, knew no more about the pah than I did, missed his way, and darkness found us at the bottom of an impenetrable-looking precipice,

with a damp, cool, and rheumatic prospect for the night.

There was no use scolding the fellow, who seemed quite as much put out as I felt, and sat with his chin resting on his knees, the very picture of misery, as long as there was sufficient light to see him, which, after all, was not very long, for darkness sets in very quickly when the sun is once gone down.

Clari gathered a heap of fern branches, and throwing a mat over them, made a tolerably dry bed, whereon I was soon fast asleep, and in happy ignorance of place or anything else.

Although I had lain down with the full conviction that every bone would be asserting its place in the morning, and rheumatism monarch of my person, I awoke without a single twinge, and must here give evidence that, damp as the climate of New Zealand

most assuredly is, rheumatism is almost unknown; and you may sleep night after night on the wet grass without any other inconvenience than a slight hoarseness in the morning.

Towards the middle of the next day we achieved the summit of the hill, and reached the edge of the forest. Here a magnificent prospect met our gaze. In front, for several miles, lay a barren, undulating plain, scattered with masses of pummice-stone, splintered as if with a mighty hammer. A dry, wiry grass clothed the ground, with here and there a stunted group of trees, all bending one way and throwing out their arms as if in agony. Beyond lay the mountains, one over the other, the highest range crowned with snow, while the smoke of Tongariro curled up to the very heavens. Ruapahu was distinctly visible, and had a truly majestic appearance.

After drinking in my fill of admiration for

this lovely prospect, we continued our journey, the guide having brightened up as soon as he saw the mountains, which were landmarks clear enough even for his comprehension. The walk across the plain occupied the best part of the day, but we took heart, and got on pretty well, being assured that we could not miss the pah that night, and would have a comfortable supper and roof to sleep under. Rain, however, began to fall in the afternoon, and the prospect grew cold and cheerless. At last the edge of the plain was reached, and the forest lay before us, not, however, such a dense, impenetrable mass as we had travelled through the previous day, but broken here and there, and much freer of underwood; perfectly, alive, too, with pigeons, so tame and fearless, that I could easily have caught as many as I liked with my hands.

And here we came upon the only real

obstacle we had to contend with on the journey, a deep and rapid river which flowed at the bottom of a yawning chasm. At the part we first struck it crossing was quite impossible; so, turning our faces in the direction of the pah, we kept up the banks, looking anxiously for a place where we might hope to get over it. At last our patience obtained its reward, and we saw a native bridge made of tree-boughs, and suspended by strong flax ropes attached to the trees on either side. Across this we crept, looking down into the dark ravine, at the bottom of which we could hear, but not see, the angry torrent, chafing against the rocks and fallen trees.

Happily we had not much farther to go, and right glad was I to see the light wreathes of smoke curling up from the forest at not more than a few hundred yards' distance, and the last gleam of twilight was fast fading out

of a grey, rainy-looking sky, as we were welcomed in the usual native fashion by a ferocious barking and the glittering teeth of a dozen or two ugly curs.

CHAPTER II.

"A NATIVE FIGHT."

THE pah, whose appearance was so welcome, was a miserably poor one, belonging to a handful of an almost extinct tribe, and so cowed and wretched did the inhabitants look, that I was heartily glad to get away, and foot-sore as I was, to proceed upon my journey. Nothing worth notice happened, and we reached Roto Mohana upon the fourth day.

From whichever side this curious lake is approached it presents a striking appearance,

totally different from any I have met with elsewhere. By some convulsion of nature the bed of the lake (which has once been a volcano) has sunk. Boiling springs rise upon all sides, one hill being absolutely studded with columns of vapour, which floats in thin white clouds over the red and yellow earth. In the very centre of the lake lie several islands; two are formed of high rocks, from every crack and crevice of which gush boiling streams. The trees and ferns rise green and luxuriant, unharmed by the steam, or, rather, seeming to flourish in it. Several families live upon the islands, but they are wizened and under grown, cultivating small patches of ground to provide food for the strangers who seem to frequent the islands for the sake of bathing in the springs. There were half-a-dozen invalids there while I was, all of them deplorable objects, much too far advanced in disease to obtain the slightest bene-

fit from any mineral bathing. Most of them were women, and more hideous specimens of human nature it would be difficult indeed to picture.

After spending about ten days, and assuredly deriving great benefit from the warm springs, we set out on our route back to Te Heu Heu's pah, and reached it upon the third day, making a much quicker journey than we had done in coming. We found the whole pah in a state of the greatest agitation; the taboo of the chief had been desecrated by the chief of a neighbouring tribe. Compensation was refused, and war declared. The first thing always done when war threatens, is to send an envoy, or ambassador, to negociate peace. This is sometimes repeated several times, and occasionally succeeds. In the present instance it had utterly failed, and there was no alternative but to fight. I could not help thinking of the time so very lately when

the tribe of Te Heu Heu refused to listen to terms of peace, and sent back the envoy with scorn. The tables had turned now, and when they would have had peace, the same answer met their overtures as they themselves had given.

Although they had been victorious they had lost several warriors; and more, who were wounded, had not yet sufficiently regained their strength to be of use in battle, therefore great was the consternation.

My gun now became an object of contention, exciting all the diplomatic powers of the chiefs as to which of them should be able to prevail upon me to lend it. But being my only protection, I had no idea of parting with it. Finding entreaties would not prevail they tried threats, but these, too, ceased when they saw I only laughed at them. At last I settled the matter by promising to fight for them myself, keeping my

own gun (and my own counsel, for I had not the slightest intention of fighting except in self-defence). They were obliged to be satisfied, and the next three days were taken up in painting, hair-dressing, and preparing their spears.

The distance being considerable, the march would, it was supposed, occupy two days, so that a number of women and slaves prepared to accompany the army with necessary provisions and comforts.

I had found out through Clari that the hostile tribe was one of the divisions of the Nga-te-Maretoa, the inhabitants of the Nga-ta-Kahuhumi, the inhabitants of the whole of the district on the coast, from the east cape to Hawke Bay, and that at Turanga was a mission station. Thinking I might find it a favourable opportunity of reaching this place, I undertook to kill as many of the enemy as I could hit. Clari had at first set

her face against my plan of seeking out the mission station, and asked me numberless questions as to what I wished to go there for, and why I was not content to wait for Tom and my letters. Now, as it happened, Tom had once told me the missionary at Turanga was a friend of his, and the idea took possession of me that very likely Tom might get on board a whaler and land near the station, so as to pay his friend a visit, and then cross the country to the Wanganui, where he would expect to find me. On hearing this Clari became as anxious to get forward as I was.

At last the day for the route arrived, and the army marched out of the pah in full dress, or, rather, undress, as all unnecessary portions of clothing, such as mats, &c., were left at home, lest they should fall into the hands of the enemy. Te Heu Heu himself, supported by his brother and several war-

riors, led the way, looking really gigantic, with his highly-dressed hair, arranged in three clubs, and ornamented with feathers quite a foot in height. Several of the warriors possessed guns, obtained how I never knew, though I believe the traders often sold broken or mutilated muskets to them. Now and then one would fire correctly enough, and cause the death of the object intended, but just as often the musket missed fire, or went off at the wrong time, so it was never a very pleasant thing to walk before a native and his gun. On the present occasion I kept prudently in the rear, and had to congratulate myself on my forethought, as one of the guns went off, and an unlucky slave fell a victim. The accident, however, did not seem to be at all unusual, or cause any commiseration, and the body was left lying half across the path, the file of men stepping over it without uttering a word of pity. The dead man was

only a slave, otherwise the ground would have been tabooed, and the man who owned the gun forced to give a large compensation; a slave has no such privileges.

At night we bivouacked upon the side of a considerable mountain, forming one of a chain that stretched across the district, joining the great centre range, or backbone of New Zealand, as the mountain chain is sometimes called. The mountains are, however, much barer of timber, and covered with sharp stones, looking as if they had been broken or splintered by machinery. Over this ground the second day's march led us, and no very light matter was it. The third day brought us within view of the sea, and I shall not easily forget the thrill the sight of it gave me. It came like the smile of an old familiar face, and carried my thoughts away to the happy island home, the glorious land I had left. Tears rose to my eyes as I gazed

upon its welcome blue, and an involuntary prayer came to my lips that I might yet breast its waters on my way back to Old England. I *was* home-sick, dear reader, or, perhaps, you will say love-sick; whichever it was, the feeling was overpowering, and I forgot where I was or whom with, until roused by Clari's hand and voice.

"Silly boy!" she said; "the blue eyes are as false as the blue sea. It kisses every pebble you fling to it. Come, time will prove."

I knew there was no use disputing or combating Clari, and that any hint of Miny roused the evil passions of her nature, so I only said—

"All the streams flow to the sea, and it is large enough for all."

"True, Martin, but they are all lost. We have not far to go now. Do you see the mountain peak to your left that is above

Turanga? We shall cross the Wairoa to-morrow when the fight is over."

"How over? We have seen nothing of the enemy as yet."

"We shall see enough of them presently. Hark! I heard a shout! Run, Martin! let us get to the heights!"

We clambered up a steep rock which shut out the view, and then saw that the enemy were really in sight, and drawn up in front of Te Heu Heu's men. Having no wish to get mixed up in the fray, I sat down to watch the proceedings. Both forces were drawn up in something resembling a square, presenting an irregular but pretty close front. After standing thus for a little time, a couple of the warriors on Te Heu Heu's side sprang forward, brandishing their arms, defying the enemy in the most insulting terms. When they fell back to their places, a couple of the opposite side performed the same piece of

bravado. This went on for a considerable time, until they had got their blood pretty well up, then they divided a little more, and commenced the war-dance. Their shrieks were more like those of infuriated demons than human creatures, and made my blood run cold. At last, after dancing defiance at one another for what appeared to me a very long time, a man rushed out of Te Heu Heu's ranks and struck down an enemy. This was the signal, drawing first blood, and with the force of a torrent the two bands rushed upon each other, and were soon mixed up in one writhing, struggling mass.

"Now let us go," said Clari, starting to her feet; "they will not miss us. And if Te Heu Heu is victor he will kill you for not helping him; if the Nga-ta-Kahuhumi wins, they will kill you because you have a gun."

Clari's words had some truth in them—it was Hobson's choice with a vengeance; and although I did not much fear the natives harming me in cold blood, still, after the heat and intoxication of the battle, there was no saying what they might do; and, after all, why should I not seize the opportunity to get away without trouble?

Getting to the other side of the rock, we kept the hill between the combatants and ourselves until we had got sufficiently out of the way to venture to strike the path across the open plain, a portion of which lay bare and treeless before us. Walking quickly and crouching as low as possible, we ran on for half a mile, when a slight dip in the seemingly level plain hid us completely, and gave us time to sit down and get a short rest. But there was no time for delay; we must gain the mountain to get under shelter of the forest, and to do this had some distance to get over.

The greater portion of the plain being covered with soft sand, made travelling no easy matter; your feet either slipping or sinking according to the way you stepped. Clari, who led the way, looked back now and then, cheering me on, her light foot making less impression upon the hot sand than mine. At last we gained what I had imagined was the foot of the mountain-chain, but which I now discovered to be only a slight hill, or bank, and getting to the top, I saw the beautiful and bright stream of the Wairoa river lying close before me, and never did a poor foot-sore and weary wanderer feel more grateful.

There could not have been a more welcome sight; and in spite of Clari's remonstrances, I plunged in. When I had thoroughly cooled and refreshed myself, we commenced the ascent of the opposite bank, and then the Wairoa mountains lay immediately before us, no very inconsiderable barrier, I can assure

you. But our goal lay far beyond them, and death, or what might be death, behind us. So we strung up our courage and walked on, keeping the top of the highest mountains as our guide or land-mark. At night we lay down upon a bed of fern, making our supper of roots, and morning saw us fresh and ready for anything. There seems to be nourishment in the very air of New Zealand, and I really believe that people can and do eat less there than in any other country, as they most assuredly drink less.

CHAPTER III.

A HOUSE AMONG THE SAVAGES.

THE missionary establishment at Turanga had been founded about a year. The church was merely a large native hut, free however from their favourite carvings, and possessing pointed gothic window-frames, though as yet they were not rich enough to have glass. The minister was a quiet well-read and gentlemanly man, whose tastes I should have supposed would have been more agreeably, if not usefully, employed among students and writers at home, than lost, as they were,

among the illiterate cannibals. He was married to a sweet pretty little wife, who had evidently not known a want or denial until she came forth upon the great and hard work of a missionary's wife. And I could not help pitying and admiring at the same time the many attempts made at reviving something like the comforts of an English home at their Raupo hut.

Although the natives in this district are noted for their intractability and ferocity, they had never offered the least violence to either the minister or his wife. And once, when she was ill, the whole tribe assembled round the house, waiting to hear every change that took place, the priests all the time chaunting incantations to drive away the sickness.

Their house was built upon a pretty slope that went down to the bay, and down one side of which the Koputelea river ran. The bay upon which the Stativa stands is some-

times called " Poverty Bay," though a greater misnomer could not well be imagined, as the plains round teemed with flax and kumara plantations, while the minister's garden was full of luxuriant cabbages, peas, and beans. A few English flowers held the most honoured spot, and were carefully tended and watched over. And as we sat at breakfast with an English china-service, beautiful butter, and a girdle cake made by my fair little hostess, and last, though not least, the perfume of mignonette and sweet-pea stealing through the open window, I began, for the first time since I had come out, to think that after all there might be worse places than New Zealand. The gentle voice and home accent of the hostess made me think of dear Miny, and I began picturing to myself what my future might be, if ever I had her bright cheery smile and spirits to help me. I suppose my face betrayed something of my anticipations; for

I was roused to a remembrance of the present by the minister saying with a laugh, "Upon my word, Mr. Tobin, if you look with such admiration at my little wife, I shall grow jealous."

"Oh! she's so like——," I broke out, but checked myself, as I remembered Clari, who had been received as my wife.

"Am I like some friend at home?" asked the lady, blushing; "how nice it is to see faces like those we love. Roger is continually laughing at me for discovering likenesses; and whenever a ship comes into the bay, threatens to parade the crew in front of the cottage, to let me see whom they resemble."

"Is Mr. Tobin like any one Jane?" asked her husband.

"Well! yes! but it is so uncomplimentary that I did not mention it."

"Oh! pray tell me," I said, laughing. "I should like to see myself."

"You will not be angry then, but really you are very much like Jack Black, the man who was nearly hung for the murder of a soldier on Norfolk Island, when papa had command of the convicts."

Her words sent a shudder through my heart. Here was Black again. I glanced at Clari, whose eyes were fixed upon the lady's with a keen hungry look, resembling that with which an animal watches its prey. I have since noticed it in persons who are listening to something being told of one they either deeply hate or fear. I saw her lips quiver once, and feared she was going to speak, but she did not; and no other symptom betrayed her knowledge of the man.

"I think you are right this time," said the minister, "I see it myself; but you must forgive it, Tobin. You brought it on yourself you know. Black has, I dare say, gone to his last account. They say he was drowned in

the Calypso, when she sank off the west coast. He was a strange fellow, and I never could make out what he had been. There was some report of his having been a man of large property in England, and only escaping with his life through great interest."

Every word he spoke fell heavily upon my heart, why, I scarcely knew. But I could not struggle against the feeling, and was heartily glad when the little wife stopped her husband by telling him we had had quite enough of horrors for the day.

"Why do you grow pale when they speak of Black?" asked Clari, as soon as we were alone; "do you fear him?"

"No, I cannot tell you what it is. I do, and yet I do not fear him."

"What can he do to you, except kill you? and he shall never do that."

"How Clari?"

"Because he shall die himself," she

answered bitterly. "He shall find out the truth some day. Aye! Martin, I loved him once, and followed him like a dog. Nothing was too hard, too mean, too difficult for me to do. And yet after a couple of months he left me; and this last time, I prayed to be taken with him, but he laughed at me, and bade me stay and nurse you. I could have killed you that night, only to say you were dead, and go with him: but I did not, and I stayed with you till my whole soul was with you, and I hated him. I did not know it till you went away; but that night, when I sat in the silent hut, and thought that he might come back some day, I sprang to my feet and rushed out to throw myself into the river. Then came the sound of your voice, and I knew how I loved you. You will not make me leave you, Martin; I will be your slave, I will work for you day and night, only swear by your God you will never leave me. You are silent, boy. Are you

thinking of the blue eyes beyond the sea? Think of her Martin, yes, think of her; but she loves you not; you will learn it bye and bye; she will never take my place; no one can love you as I have done. My beloved, am I not beautiful in your eyes? Say what I shall do; look at me and tell me what I shall ornament myself with to make me the most beautiful. Is my voice not as sweet as the running brook? Can I not sing like the bird? I cannot read the black and white leaves of a book, but you can teach me, you can show me how; and then Martin, I shall be as beautiful in your eyes as the blue eyes across the sea."

She was lying upon the grass, which grew luxuriantly on the spot, suddenly she passed one arm round my neck, and gazed in my face, tears standing in her large eager eyes. She said, truly, she was very beautiful. Poor Clari! all her nature seemed undergoing a

change. The burst of passion when she spoke of Black was the last remnant of her old impetuosity that I had seen for weeks.

The hut appropriated to our use while at Turanga was about a quarter of a mile distant from the minister's, but quite near enough for us to become great friends. I told him my history as far as the reason of my emigrating, and adventures since my arrival, excepting only the acquaintance with Black, whose name I could not bring myself to utter. He listened to my story with the attention of a brother, giving me the advantage of his experience. One subject we mutually avoided, and that was Clari; though I could trace, in many of our conversations, his desire to impress me with a true sense of my obligations either to her or to whomsoever I might wish to make my wife in future days. His little wife, too, lent her aid, though in a very different way; for she set about teaching Clari

all the duties of an English housewife, and I looked on with astonishment at her nimble fingers plying the home-like needle and thread, while her dress and general appearance soon showed proofs of her intercourse with a lady.

Nothing now was said of our continuing our journey; Clari was much too deeply engrossed, and the peace and happiness around me lured me into the belief that I had much better make up my mind to wait for a passing ship, in hopes of hearing tidings of Tom, than perhaps miss him altogether by attempting the journey on foot.

Going short journeys with the minister among the neighbouring tribes, I managed to collect a great deal of intelligence as to their feelings towards the English, and their universal wish for peace and fellowship. Although a great many had professed Christianity, and regularly attended the

church services, they still clung to many of their old superstitions; and I verily believe the great spread of the gospel was much assisted by these very superstitions. During the year that the missionary had been at work, they had improved immensely, both in their appearance and demeanour. They ate more wholesome and better cooked food; were more warmly and healthily clothed, and kept their houses in a much cleaner state. Their fields were neatly and carefully cultivated, not a weed daring to make its appearance, while they managed to obtain a great many comforts and even luxuries from the whalers, &c., who put in from time to time, and were always ready to stow away flax, if they could get it.

Fishing was one of their important occupations, and was performed in the most regular and methodical manner imaginable, preceded by incantations and religious cere-

monies. As dried fish forms the staple of their winter stock of provisions, so the supply caught and preserved is of great moment. When the season for fishing approached, the whole settlement became in a bustle. Nets which had been tabooed and laid by on scaffoldings erected for the purpose, were brought down and spread out, some of these nets measuring nearly two thousand yards in length, and requiring about five hundred people to draw them properly. Then followed preparations of food; for as soon as the net had been drawn in the bay, they proceeded further along the coast to another likely spot, and so on until they have caught what they think sufficient. Their hooks were made of bone, generally human, and very clumsy. These are all exposed to the air the day preceding the expedition, and have an incantation performed by the priests over them.

When the net was drawn, the priest standing up in the foremost canoe, uttered a prayer in a loud voice and with outstretched arms, and the first fish touched was cast back into the sea as an offering, or as some of them told me that it might go and bring all its friends to the hooks and nets.

I was, of course, eager to join the fun, and the first haul of the net was very successful. I had never seen such a mass of fish before, and of such strange forms too.

Great rejoicings followed this omen of success, and three ovens were prepared and tabooed immediately, one for the chief, one for the priest, and one for the fishing party, while some of the best fish were picked out and sent to the minister's house. Thus ended the first day's fishing; and the next they departed about three miles higher up the coast.

CHAPTER IV.

A SAIL! A SAIL!

THE day after I returned from the fishing expedition, the long expected sail was signalled, and the whole settlement assembled on the beach to watch her approach. After a couple of hours of intense anxiety she hove to, and down went her anchor. At the same moment a boat was lowered, in a few minutes more we were in possession of the following facts, that she was a trading brig from Sydney, bound for Coromandel, for kauri spars. She had touched at Port Nicholson

and brought me the unexpected and welcome news that Colonel Wakefield, the pioneer of the New Zealand company, had arrived in the Tory, and had already purchased a considerable tract of land, and founded a town upon the shore of the bay.

Unlike the body of the missionaries my host highly approved of the system professed by the New Zealand Company; and held the opinion that the truest and most Christian-like policy towards the natives, would be to amalgamate them as speedily as possible, making them one with us in feeling, government, and faith. But this, I am sorry to say, was the very opposite of the ground taken by the generality of the missionaries, headed by Mr. Busby, the English agent, or Consul, or representative at Korrorariki. And my friend assured me that whatever human power could do to oppose the progress of emigration, would be done; and, above all,

my plan attempted by the joint-stock company.

Many of the missionaries had purchased enormous tracts of land, and almost given up their professed object of teaching, in the busy life of settlers. And my friend spoke strongly in favour of the Wesleyan and Roman Catholic rule, which forbids a clergyman, or priest, adopting any other profession for the sake of making money, a system it would have been well if New Zealand had carried out in all denominations. But to return to the news brought by the brig.

When she left the Tory was on the point of making a survey of the district near Mount Egmont, and the captain strongly advised me if I had any particular interest in the company, to join the pioneer party as soon as possible, and get my choice of land.

How to get down to Port Nicholson was now the question. Overland it was a fearful

journey, and looked more so probably from my already knowing a great portion of it, and fully appreciating its difficulties.

At last, after a great deal of consultation, I decided upon accepting the captain of the brig's offer of a passage to Coromandel, where there were, he assured me, continually ships going to and coming from Korrorarika; from which place it was generally easy enough to reach other parts of the island, as the whalers were always ready to turn a penny by taking a passenger. I should thus see Korrorarika, and hear tidings of Tom. So all was arranged.

The ship was to sail at midnight, and Clari and I bid farewell to our kind friends, and went on board at dusk.

Our voyage was as uninteresting as could well be. We were too far out to sea to observe anything of the coast, and meeting a regular New Zealand train of wind, were kept

knocking about for fully a week longer than the captain anticipated. But there was no help for it; wind and tide proverbially wait for no man, and the winds off the shores of New Zealand seem endowed with a malignant hatred of men and ships, tearing and howling at them with all their bitterest fury. Though the brig was a little tub of a thing, she rode out the storms like a duck, and at last anchored safe and sound in Mercury Bay, from whence next day we coasted round the cape into the firth of the Thames, and anchored finally in Coromandel harbour.

Certainly I had no reason to regret coming round this way, as even the troubles and trials of being buffeted about in such a merciless manner by the ocean was completely counterbalanced by the magnificent scenery that now surrounded me.

The firth of the Thames is one of the most wonderful and beautiful harbours in the world.

The country surrounding it is mountainous, but intersected by rich plains and valleys, while the hills are clothed with the kauri tree, the immense value of which may be imagined when the reader learns, that it paid a ship's voyage to bring home four good spars.

I saw several trees lying ready to be embarked, and certainly nothing could be more appropriate for the purpose for which they were designed—that of spars for the Royal Dockyards.

At Coromandel, by great good luck, we found a vessel on the point of starting for Korrorariki, and lost no time in making our arrangements with the captain, who being an American, charged accordingly; and so crammed us with his wonderful adventures by flood and field, that I for one was most thankful, when starting up one day, he squirted a stream of tobacco juice neatly past my foot, and exclaimed—

"'Im d——d if the rascal at the top ha'n't forgot to sing out 'Land ahoy!' I guess he'll get a precious hiding," he added, looking up at the man in the top, who was fast asleep, and to my eyes in imminent danger of escaping any hiding henceforth and for ever.

"I guess if y'ere goin to Korrorarika with a gal; ye'll hev' to keep yer pistols precious handy. It's a 'tarnal ungodly place and no mistake. Now if ye'll take my advice, I'd rig her out in trowsers. Ye'd save both her and yerself a world of bother, and no mistake."

The advice, roughly though it was given, was kindly meant; and as Clari jumped at the idea, I went aft to the captain and told him how it would be.

"That gal's got a head as well as a heart I guess," said he; "it'll save ye a good pound of powder. But you must look 'tarnal slippery not to let the fellows here get a scent of your

game, or ye might as well give in at once. Now jist keep her down when we run in; I'll give ye the word when ye're to make a start. And look there, in that box ye'll find a lot of toggery, take what you want, lad. They were a boy's, and precious natty he was, poor dear; but since he's gone they've been there, waiting to come useful. So if they'll do the gal a good turn, I'll not grudge them; poor Job wouldn't ither, could he know. Come, sir, git her down, and trust me to keep the coast clear."

The rough old skipper's kindly interest in Clari proved to me more than anything else what a place Korrorarika must be. Nor was I disappointed, for verily a greater sink of iniquity, and all uncleanness, could scarcely be imagined.

The pretty bay was well filled with ships, the shores were covered with buildings of all shapes and sizes, principally houses of enter-

tainment, and lodgings of the lowest and most disreputable description, crowded by drunken sailors and escaped convicts, unrestrained by law human or divine; the women were natives, or half-breeds, who were brought down in regular batches by the chiefs, who soon found they could drive a more lucrative trade in this way than any other, and profited accordingly.

The missionaries and British residents had not the slightest power, and there was no attempt at exercising law until, as I had found afterwards, a number of aggravated offences made the matter too flagrant, and the gentry decided to form a sort of court, with power to punish offenders. Several were punished—but without the example thus made having any visible effect upon the society at large.

Drunkenness and debauchery of every description reigned rampant. The town was

one scene of carousal from morning till night, and doubly so from night till morning, as the light of torches stuck up over the doors of drinking and dancing shops gave a hideous glare to the scene. Shouts, ribald songs and obscene jests, mingled with the shrieks of women and twang of fiddles, made night hideous.

Fights were continually taking place, and scarcely a day elapsed without some of them having a fatal termination. But death was as little cared for as was the thought of eternity. Yet, what else could be expected among a society of four or five hundred men, the very scum of the earh, escaped co nvicts, runaway sailors, beach combers, sawyers, and New Zealanders, the latter eager to imitate the vices of the new comers, as eagerly as if opportunity had been to follow their virtues.

The town at the date I am speaking of, namely, in 1847, had one church, one theatre,

five hotels—as they were called—innumerable "hells," grog shops, dancing houses, billiard tables and skittle alleys. If ever there was a den of wickedness Korrorarika was one. And when, some time after, I heard of its destruction by Heki, I could not help thinking it an act of justice, ordained by an outraged Power to put a stop to the growth of such a pandemonium.

The first thing, after securing the most respectable lodgings we could in one of the hotels, was to find out something about Tom, and for this purpose, leaving Clari, whom I had passed off as my servant, I sallied forth to look for the missionary, to whose care my letters were to be forwarded. He lived about three miles inland, and after considerable difficulty I made my way to his house, which I found the very picture of comfort, and even luxury, while the master did not certainly bear any outward

signs of those privations and struggles one is so apt to associate with all missionaries. He was a short, stout, rosy-faced little man, with a strong propensity to make havoc among his H's, and a glaring disrespect to the Queen's English, particularly when he grew hot upon the subject of the town, or "the disgraceful proceedings of the joint-stock company." From him I obtained a great insight into the feelings of one party, or, as I may call it, the missionary party; and although I felt it my duty to tell him I belonged to the company he was condemning wholesale, I think it rather increased than diminished his animadversions, and I had at last to take up the cudgels in my own defence, when he cooled down considerably, and began to talk more rationally, though with such blind prejudice against the whole system, and any organised emigration of the English, that I was glad to

find my letters were in the hands of Mr. Bushby, and thus escape from the padrè's clutches. Upon reaching the residence of the Consul, I saw the British flag waving in the breeze, but alas! triumphant over nothing; rather seeming by its presence to sanction vice and lawlessness. Mr. Bushby was at home, and received me in a polite friendly way, but looked startled when I stated my name and business; and well he might, for to my consternation I found that a couple of days before Tom had arrived in search of my letters, a man calling himself by my name had made his appearance, and not only obtained my letters, but partaken of Mr. Bushby's hospitality for a day, and drawn upon him for a pretty considerable amount, as agent for the banking firm upon whom I had letters of credit. It was in vain to attempt any search. The man might be within three miles, and yet

be as safe as if he were in Kamschatka. Then came surmises as to who he could be, and how he had obtained such minute particulars of my history, all of which had been correctly stated. The description given by Mr. Bushby gave me no clue, and, stunned and wondering, I left the residence to go back to my lodgings, and think over the best course to pursue—and also take some means of tracing Tom, who I feared might have left the place.

CHAPTER V.

STORY OF A LOST LIFE.

After leaving Mr. Bushby's house, I turned towards the town with the full intention of going direct to my temporary abode, and consulting with Clari as to our next move, but so intent was I upon the dilemma in which I found myself, that I took a wrong turn in the narrow path leading to the town, and was only awakened to the fact by feeling a heavy hand laid most unceremoniously upon my shoulder, and a voice demanding, "What the —— I meant by

walking there?" The "there" was, I now found, a garden; the owner of the hand and voice to whom I next looked, was as fine a looking specimen of an emigrant as I had ever met with. He stood at least six foot four or five, and carried breadth and strength in proportion. What you could see of his face, namely, his forehead, eyes and nose, hair concealing the lower part, were singularly handsome. He was dressed in clean fustian trowsers, with—a rather unusual thing in Korrorarika—a clean blue and white striped flannel shirt. A knife and pistol were stuck in his belt, and a fierce impatient glance in his eyes, shewed he would use them if need came.

We looked at each other steadily for some seconds, and evidently with a mutual interest; not in the way strangers meet and gaze, but in the way two men, who

have expected to meet,—who have heard much of each other from mutual friends—or have read of each other and met in thought—will gaze.

I had a vague idea of having seen this man at some remote period of my life, but when or where I could not recall; and I could see by the changing expression in his face, that he too recognised or fancied he recognized a familiar face in mine. His expression softened almost to tenderness. But as if ashamed he frowned heavily, and a deep flush sprang up, while with an ugly oath he demanded who gave me leave to walk over his ground. Though the request was made by no means in a conciliatory tone, and my temper at none of its sweetest, I felt no anger; I was trying hard to remember where I had seen this man before.

"Well, to tell you the truth, friend, I

was thinking of a very disagreeable occurrence, and didn't see where I was going."

"Then I'd advise you to give up thinking of such things, young man," said the stranger; "this isn't the sort of country to walk about in without looking before you. You're not long out, I imagine."

He seemed to wait for my answer more anxiously than the curiosity of a mere stranger would warrant, and again I felt sure I had seen him.

"I've been out a few months, but only came here two days ago to look for letters."

"Well! and what do you think of us?"

"That it's the most ungodly hole I have fallen into, and from the English resident down they are a ——"

"Hold! hold! youngster," laughed my new acquaintance, "you're liberal with your tongue. So you've seen the 'man of war;' what has his game been?"

I told him; and as I did so his face grew pale, and an eager expression stole over it, his eyes dilated, and seemed to read my thoughts.

"Your name, boy," he said in a low voice, when I had ceased speaking. I had scarcely uttered it when putting his hand to his head, as if struck by a sudden pain, he turned away, and staggered into the cottage hard by. Not exactly knowing whether there was any one to render him assistance or not, I was debating whether I should go after him, when a deep groan determined my course. Entering the doorway I saw him lying upon his face upon a bed, his arms stretched out, and his hands clenched as if in a fit. He had not heard me enter, and I, utterly unable to think or act, stood staring with a sort of fascination, while some great agony, some convulsive action, shook him from head

to foot, broken from time to time with inarticulate expressions.

Some minutes elapsed, and then uncertain whether I should speak and attempt to ease this suffering, or go away, and let him recover in time and alone, I stood debating in my own mind. Suddenly, as if on the impulse of momentary thought, he started up; in turning he became aware I was there, and shrank back, covering his face and visibly shuddering. I could not help going forward; there was something impelled me.

"Is there anything I can do?" I asked; "are you often thus?"

"Yes," he muttered hoarsely, "too often to last long."

"Poor fellow! why don't you see a doctor, and get advice what to do?"

He only shook his head, and I continued—

"Shall I go or stay, friend?"

"Stay; I have something to say to you when this shaking fit goes off. Sit here till I come back."

And with a strong effort he went out; and I, having nothing to do for the next few minutes, began taking notes. The hut was built of raupo, but lined throughout with thick white-washed canvas; and upon this were pasted a number of engravings, principally views of the sea-coast in Devonshire, and one—I could scarcely believe my eyes—of the king's house at Slyndhurst. Delighted with a sight of the familiar spot, I went up to it, and the memory of the happy days spent there coming over me, banished all other reflections.

"You recognize the place?" said the man, who, I suddenly became conscious, was standing beside me, though I had not heard him come back.

"Yes; it seems strange to find it here."

"There are stranger things than that, boy. Come into the sunshine; this place is choking me again."

I followed, and he walked on through the little garden and enclosure, then on and on into the rougher country, where a sort of commonage existed, the land being claimed by those who call themselves the "council," as ground for public buildings, but there being no money to erect any, and at present no enterprising speculator to undertake without ready cash, it remained a dreary waste.

On we went, my guide striding along, increasing his pace as he went. I had been counted a good pedestrian in Hants, but here I freely own I broke down more than once, and heartily wished my new friend would stop, or slacken his speed, but he did not seem inclined to do either. At last we reached the edge of the forest, and there he

stopped, throwing himself down at full length upon a mossy bank. He turned his face to me, a sad smile passed over it, as he saw mine flushed, and I dare say expressing no small amount of vexation; this, however, he took no heed of, only pointing to the couch he had chosen, as if recommending me the same, and taking off his cap, passed his hand once or twice through his hair, which clustered in thick black curls over his massive forehead. Again I knew his face, and almost unconsciously I exclaimed—

"I am sure I have seen you before."

"Never, boy—at least, not in the flesh; it is the instinct of the human heart makes it appear so to you. Did you ever hear your mother speak of your father?"

"Yes," I said, never pausing to analyze the influence he seemed to exert; "he died before I was born. She told me that, but very little more."

"What more? Nay, I have a right to ask; tell me."

"The night before she died she told me that if I ever met any one of my own name I should not believe what they might tell me; that all my father's relations turned upon him; and although they were friends in prosperity, became his bitterest enemies in adversity, I think——"

"Go on," said my companion, who sat with his face turned away; "tell me everything."

"I think there was something my father had done which embittered my mother's life. I do not know why I think so, but so it seems to me. If he had died as other men die, I do not think she would have been so unhappy."

"Had she no friends near?—no one to whom she could confide her grief?"

"Yes; the clergyman, Dr. Cary."

"Who?" he exclaimed, turning upon me fiercely; "who?"

"Dr. Cary, the rector of Slyndhurst."

"My God! and *he* was her comforter? And she—your mother—how did she receive this parson, as a friend or a lover?"

I shook my head sadly. It had been a common report in Slyndhurst that the rector wished to marry my mother, so the question did not strike me as peculiar, though the harsh, bitter tone in which it was asked roused my curiosity, and made me look up at the speaker. He was deadly pale.

"You knew my mother?" I asked, the strangeness of his questions and manner only striking me with the conviction at the instant, although the reader, no doubt, thinks me very blind not to have seen it before.

"You knew my mother?" I repeated, anxiously.

"Yes, Martin Tobin, I did; I knew your

mother years before she married. I knew your father too, God forgive him! I was with him to the last, and conveyed the intelligence of his death to your mother. She was then going abroad. What could have taken her to Slyndhurst?"

He stopped for a few minutes, and sat buried in thought, then he said in a dreamy tone—

"You do not know how your father died. Do you wish to know?"

A cold shudder ran through my veins—I could not answer. I felt as if the revelation would crush me—yet I was compelled to listen; there might be crime, there must be more than ordinary grief in the revelation, else why should my mother be so careful in concealing it, bidding me never to ask? A burning curiosity rose in my heart; why should I not know? Why should I remain in darkness? Better know the worst at once

than go blindly on. These thoughts passed like lightning through my mind; then came the remembrance of my mother's injunction not to believe anything they told me of my father.

"Yes," I said, "I must hear, good or bad. It is best I should know. Speak on, but remember, when you have spoken I shall judge for myself; and that the man you are going to speak of, whatever he was to you and the rest of mankind, was my father, and the husband of the dearest and best mothers that ever man had."

"No fear; I am not likely to forget. Well, your father and I were boys together—never separated, I may say. We were of the same age, disposition, and tastes and habits. We were to go into the army, and went to board with Mr. Cary, the man you tell me is rector of Slyndhurst. He was then young and unmarried, and the curate of a small parish in

Devonshire. I lived with him for four years, then went to join the regiment to which I had been appointed. Your father left at the same time. He was a great favourite everywhere, and especially with Mr. Cary, who made more a companion than a pupil of him. Indeed, although there was a considerable difference in mere years, the balance in worldly knowledge was rather on your father's side. After he joined his regiment he kept up this friendship; and when he fell in love with your mother, Mr. Cary came and married them. He himself married a few months after, and immediately wrote, begging your father to bring his wife to visit them. The invitation was at the moment doubly acceptable. Your father had been unfortunate in speculations, and had lost money in various ways; some other time I shall tell you how. At the moment the invitation came he had not a half-crown left. In fact, he had to

borrow the wherewithal for his journey. He and your mother were equally surprised to find the bride a young and beautiful girl. I have seen her, and never saw a lovelier or more fascinating woman. She had a singular power of awaking love. It was impossible to be near her, to speak to her, to see her, and yet not love her, but not with the love which a virtuous woman would rouse. Every evil passion—and God knows there are many in a man's heart—began to thrust up their heads, making you feel a perfect devil, and ready for anything.

"I had often read of the power of evil spirits to take possession of such forms as they pleased, the more effectually to work for the ruin of souls. I never believed it before I saw her—but if ever the spirit of a demon entered into the human breast, it most assuredly did into that woman. She was an embodied lie; she could not be true or

honest. Born and bred in a quiet country village, perfectly unacquainted with society, never having been beyond the limits of her own county, and wearing a mask of innocent beauty such as rarely falls to the lot of woman, no wonder the good man, her husband, had been deceived, and imagining he had found a being little short of an angel, had lavished the whole devotion of his heart —and you, who know him, must know what that is—upon this fiend. Your father was the first man of the world into whose society she had been thrown. She had never loved her husband; and all the passion—it was not love, it could not be in such a nature—she was imbued with, concentrated upon him. He admired her, and, like all else, was fascinated, but then for a long time he went no further. He had a charm against even her wiles in the pure love of your mother. The woman saw the barrier, and to her conscience nothing

was a sin. Day by day she wormed herself into your mother's confidence, obtaining at last the whole history of your father's difficulties. Armed with this, she went to Mr. Cary and told him what she had heard. He was deeply grieved, but more so, because he had not been told it by his friend, and would have gone instantly to him and offered him any sum he could spare, or even obtain for him. But this was not his wife's plan; she besought him to let her have the pleasure of giving the money, telling him she knew praise was hateful to all kind men. Taking a cheque for a large sum of money—all Mr. Cary had in the world—she went to your father, and——" he paused.

"Your mother, completely cajoled by her pretended friendship, saw nothing. Your father forgot all—wife, honour, duty—all were as nothing. But he had strength yet left for one thing. He thought if he left her

he might escape greater sin; and pretending to have business fled from her presence. A few days after the Carys followed to London, and never having visited it before, the lady was to see all. Mr. Cary had business, and could not always accompany her, so chose your father. Driven beside himself, mad with passion, hating himself and tired of life, your father fell, your mother was deserted; and Mr. Cary awoke to the fact that he was not only a dishonoured and deceived man, but he had been robbed of all his false wife could lay her hands upon.

"Your mother bore it nobly; Mr. Cary was like a madman, and throwing up his living left the country. For a time nothing was heard of the fate of the others; but at last came the intelligence that she had gone off with another lover, that your father had followed and shot him like a dog.

"He was brought home and tried, and the

woman was the principal witness against him; and through her marvellous power of fascination and beauty so working upon the feelings of the court, he was sentenced to banishment and penal servitude for life. He died by his own hand before the day for the execution of the verdict, and I was deputed to tell your mother. After that interview I left England, and shall never return to it."

It would be impossible for me to describe the feelings with which I had listened to this revelation, the secret my poor mother had so carefully concealed from me. My life rose before me as if it had been that of another. Scenes I had forgotten now assumed an overwhelming importance. The veil had been lifted, and the undercurrent of the past lay visible. I never thought of myself as myself. I was as it were looking on and listening to a terrible drama, the plot of which is woven into every string of the heart. With a swimming

sensation in my head, and thick sobs rising in my throat, I buried my face in the grass, and tried to think calmly.

"Don't take on, boy," said the stranger, in a kindly tone, "there's life before you. There'll be no visitation upon you of your father's crimes. I've learnt to know God's justice better than that. The wicked bear their own punishment here and hereafter. It's hard to hear of things we are ashamed of, but better know the worst at once. You must have heard it some time or other. Better be ready to face it, and clear up what you can."

I felt the truth of what he said, and a slight sensation of comfort stole into my heart at the idea that I might, through this man, remove some blame from my father's name; for now my heart was burning with a passionate desire to see his memory cleared, and I inwardly breathed a vow that I would do so.

"What are you thinking of, Martin?"

"Clearing my father."

"How, boy? He is dead; let him rest."

"If you were his friend, you will help me," I said, paying no heed to his interruption. "I swear to God that I will try every means to remove every blot that can be."

"Silence, boy; I tell you he is dead; the world has forgotten him; why should your voice trumpet his crime and your shame forth to a new generation. Time is merciful, and covers even dark deeds with a veil; do you not think it is flying in the face of Providence to tear this away."

"God knows," I said, impressed even against my will by his manner.

"Well, if you doubt, take my advice. If it is ever necessary, you will find I am ready, but my advice is this, follow your mother's example; he is dead; let his faults, like his

memory, die with him. Perhaps at the judgment-day he may receive that mercy man denied from an all-seeing God; till then you must have patience. Let God rule his world, and let us do our duty when we can see it. Depend upon it if we do we shall find plenty to fill our hands. And now get up, Martin, Go to your home, wherever that is, and come to me to-morrow; or, stay, come with me now."

"No, no; I'll see you to-morrow; give me time."

"Where are you staying, boy?"

I named the place.

"Well," he said, "promise to come to-morrow."

"I promise."

"Then, good night! Don't stay here, go to bed; and God will help you; He's helped many a worse, as I can vouch for. God bless you?"

So saying he left me, and by the impulse of the moment, though scarcely knowing what I did, I got up mechanically, finding my way home, though, like a drunken man, I could not tell how.

CHAPTER VI.

A PISTOL SHOT.

EARLY next day I again sought out the hut, eager to hear more; and possessed with a strong curiosity to learn something of the man himself, who besides possessing such knowledge had exercised a sort of fascination upon me, that left no room to doubt the truth of all he had told me.

He was hard at work in his garden when I reached it, and must have been for some hours, as a large portion of earth was newly turned over.

"It kills time, Martin," he said with a laugh, in answer to something I said; "a fellow would rather be put to hard labour than be left idle with his conscience and time. If the judges knew it, they could frighten the unfortunate devils more by sentencing them to remain idle, than by giving them constant labour; but now you've come I'll stop; I've a great deal to ask and hear. You've not slept much, to judge by your white face. I've been thinking over your letters," he continued, after sitting down on a bench beside the hut, "you wern't very coherent yesterday; you won't mind telling me the story over again. Perhaps you had better date back to your arrival in this precious colony. Where did you land?"

I told him, and went step by step through my life in New Zealand, up to the day I met him. He listened without making a single remark, though I could see by his features

that he was using the control of a strong will to remain silent.

When I had done, he swore a deep oath, and, getting up, walked impatiently backward and forward for about five minutes. Then stopping he threw himself down on the bench again, and turning almost fiercely upon me said—

"So you've inherited your father's evil passions after all; your mother and the parson have not eradicated that?"

I asked him angrily what he meant.

"Don't be a hypocrite, boy. Your father was an outcast, and died in prison through a false woman, and you are in a fair way to follow his example. Why how old are you? Barely twenty, and yet, according to your own account, you've left a wife in all but man's eyes in England, and are living here with another man's mistress. Don't look

savage; I will be heard. Does this woman love you?"

I believed so, and told him so.

"I know the man," he said, suddenly, as if forgetting all about Clari, "and a blacker-hearted ruffian does not walk. He is a 'lifer,' but escaped by strangling the soldier on guard; and this woman you have sold your self-respect for, was the soldier's mistress. Yes! you may start, it is true. She may be tired of Black, and come to you of her own accord, but I doubt it. A woman who could stay with the murderer of her lover is'nt likely to become an angel for the sake of a boy of twenty. She's in Black's pay, Martin, and what she has told you has been taught by him. But now tell me, why do you think he has such a spite against you? You never harmed him?"

I shook my head.

"Then I can tell you. It is your name:

he owed your father a grudge, and is paying off scores on you. You say he's got your letters, destroyed your credit with Bushby, and robbed you. It's an ugly list, but we can foil him yet. Does the woman know anything of your meeting with me?"

"No, but she suspects something."

"And will ferrit it out; so the sooner we act the better. First, where do you suppose this sailor you told me of has taken himself to. If you find him, stick to him, Martin. A true friend, though he is born a few steps below you in the world, is worth something. And this man must be a noble fellow. I don't suppose he's far from here, unless Black has come across him, and then——" by a significant gesture he explained that there was little chance of our finding him in this world in that case.

Such an idea had never until this moment crossed my mind; but the great probability

of such a meeting taking place, and what the result might be, now forced itself upon me. But I could not entertain the belief that Clari had been deceiving me, or connect her apparent devotion with any such motive as my new friend hinted. Still, when I had time to think of it more calmly, there were some circumstances which rather confirmed his opinion, and made me, reluctantly enough, so far give in as to promise to act solely by his directions.

His advice was that I should immediately go to Mr. Bushby, protest against the fraud upon my name that had been committed, and against any further communication except from myself being attended to; that I should proceed to the southern coast, and meet the Company's agent, Colonel Wakefield, obtain his advice and identification; but first I was to write to my agent, &c., in England, stating as much as was necessary, and stopping any

payments excepting under a new form of order which we concocted on the spot. When I had written as my adviser dictated, and sealed the letter, he said—

"Have you not another letter to write?"

I knew he meant to Miny; but I thought of Clari, and shame held me back; so I said, "no;" and he turned away with a short abrupt movement, and began pacing the hut. I had already found out this was a favourite habit when any unusually irritating occurrence took place, and waited with some curiosity as to what would ensue. Presently he stopped beside me, laid his hand upon my shoulder, and in a low sad voice said—

"Write to her, Martin, tell her the whole story. Do not soften your own guilt, or lessen, what I give you my word for it, is the woman's. Make a clean breast of it; it's the only honest way to deal with a true-hearted woman. Tell her everything, and bid her

judge for herself. If she loves you as one who is to share your life, your cares, and sorrows ought to do, you need not fear; if she does not, better *have* done with her at once. I've had a bitter experience, boy, and what I tell *you* to do, I would do myself. There! I'll come back in half an hour; don't write till I do, but think it over, try it in your own mind, and which ever you think best do."

So saying he left the hut. And with my hands strained across my eyes I sat trying to think of his advice in every possible way. In which ever way I put it, I was lost. If I told her, I might lose her, and must, I thought, lose her trust, forgetting that women only can truly trust when they know that the whole, good or bad, as it may come, or may have been, is laid open before them. No woman who has the slightest knowledge of the world, either from books or experience, but must

know how manifold and subtle are the temptations that beset a man, from his school days up to the moment that a pure and true love places itself as a shield between him and evil. All a woman asks is complete trust, frankness, and confidence. Men who act thus know it, and to those who do not, all we can say is they deserve what reproach and distrust they meet with.

The half-hour had passed; and I was determined that I would make a clean breast of it, but not to Miny. I felt I dare not for shame do that. I would tell her mother, and ask her to tell Miny as she thought best, and make my peace, if she thought I deserved it. I told my friend the decision I had come to, and he, to my surprise, applauded it. So I wrote to Mrs. Millard, telling all, and begging her to do as she thought best.

While I wrote my adviser's eyes were fixed upon me, and when I had done, he came up

to me, raised my face, and, after looking at me with an expression I shall never forget, said—

"Well and nobly done, Martin; you'll never repent this."

Then, before I was aware of what he was doing, he stooped and kissed my forehead.

When I had closed my letters, he took them from me, telling me he would see to them himself. Then, in a solemn voice and manner, gave me his advice to leave Korrorarika at once, and without telling Clari. I could not do this, and told him so. Then he proposed going home with me; and that if after an interview with her he could not convince me that he was right in his conjectures as to her appointed work, I might act as I chose.

Unwilling enough I gave in; and just as it was growing dark we set off for the town. The way was rough enough in daylight, but

ten times worse at night, when at every step you were in danger of plunging headforemost into some pit or drain.

"By the by," said my friend, as we were nearing the house I had taken up my quarters in, "you ought to know my name, it is Trevor. You can call me such now. You must go first, tell the woman you've picked up an old friend, and when you are ready, call, and I'll come in. When I do, don't mind me, keep your eyes on her, and you'll be convinced."

I felt inclined to be angry with his stratagem; but still promised to go by his directions, and leaving him, ran upstairs to the room we inhabited. Clari was lying half asleep, and only roused up slowly to ask me where I had been. I told her I had met an old friend, and had stayed with him. She opened her eyes wider, and asked me who I meant. I repeated the same, and then gave the ap-

pointed signal, when Trevor entered. Clari stared at him for a moment, then springing up stood pale and terror-stricken, while he, closing the door, advanced slowly towards her; but just as he raised his hand to lay it, as I supposed, on her shoulder, she turned round and rushed out of the room.

"Are you convinced, Martin," Trevor asked, pointing to the door. "Go after her, and hear anything she has to say; then I will speak to her alone."

I found Clari standing beside the window of the next room, with a deep flush upon her face, and one of my pistols grasped in her right hand.

"Why do you look at me that way?" she said fiercely; "why do you bring that man to recall the dead? What has he told you? Poor lying boy, this is what kept you away. Do I deserve this, Martin?" she said, lower-

ing her voice, and bending forward. "Have I not been true to you? Have I not watched over you, toiled for you, and followed you in storm and sunshine? I left the days of my misery behind when I found you. I had well nigh forgotten them, and it is your hand that must force them upon me. O Martin, if—— but look here! you taught me to care to live, to love virtue and good; I will not live to go back to my misery."

Raising the pistol, she put the muzzle against her temple. My blood ran cold, my lips refused to utter. She saw this, and with a triumphant smile went on—

"I swear that unless you promise to send away that man, and ——" she paused, her eyes turned to the door, mine involuntarily following, I saw Trevor.

"You are a clever actress," he said, with a sneer. "It would be almost better for yourself, and certainly for Martin, if you put

your threat into execution; he's not likely to gain much by your life being prolonged."

In an instant she lowered the pistol, and discharged it full at Trevor, who staggered forward, and with a groan fell heavily forward.

To rush to his side and raise his head, was the work of an instant. The blood was trickling from his mouth, and a horror that he was actually killed struck upon me. Clari sprang forward, pushing me aside to gaze at him; then with a low laugh exclaimed, "Revenge at last."

She threw the pistol away, looking back once from the doorway with an expression I shall never forget; in it, mingled hate and triumph. I saw it in my mind's eye for many a day, and once again in living reality; but at that moment I was so much occupied by Trevor's fall, and, as I thought, death, that I did not even attempt to stop her. The noise

of the pistol-shot brought one or two persons to the scene; one just looked, and passed on; but another, who happily knew something of surgery, stayed by me, and helped me to raise the wounded man, who lay to all appearance dead.

CHAPTER VII.

SAYING GOOD-BYE TO TREVOR.

Trevor was not dead, the shock brought back the symptoms of an old complaint, and as his recovery seemed to be slow and tedious, he insisted upon my leaving him. It was in vain to remonstrate; he decided for me, promising that in case of not hearing from me within six months, he would come south and seek me. The few days during which I had nursed him, had given him a great influence over me, which while it drew my heart toward him

with strong ties of love and friendship, at the same time controlled and purified every passionate impulse. Over and over again I told him everything I could remember of my mother and early home days. One night when I was sitting by his bedside, I had shut the book I had been reading aloud, thinking he had gone to sleep, but he looked up saying,

"Martin, neither you nor I seem to have said a word about one thing. Can you guess what that is? Well; no—it's my fault, being the eldest, and I ought to have done more. My example has not been the best in the world. Your mother taught you to love your God. You've not forgotten her precepts, lad, in this ungodly land,—God-forgotten I'd nearly said—but it's not that; God has made it a paradise, man is trying hard to make it a hell. Just think, Martin, what a land it is. Could anything be lovelier or richer? Could any climate be

more healthy and pleasant? And as for these poor fellows of natives, they have no radical evil in them, and are simply waiting for proper training. And yet what have you, even in the few months you've been out, seen? Drunkenness, lying, thieving, and deceit, riding rampant; God nowhere; the devil triumphant. And this too, all coming from Englishmen. Nay, you need not try to exonerate them. I know best. I've been in a few lands, and here for nearly fifteen years; so I've a chance of knowing. I never was what men call a religious fellow myself; but what I've seen here of wickedness, has done more to make me so than all the psalm-singing and cant of a hundred professional saints. They say, 'A fellow must sow his wild oats.' Some take a long time to get through the process; others get rid of them broad-cast, and so empty the sack the sooner. Well! one

don't hear much of the crop; but wild oats grow as strong and heartily as the best grain. And I can tell you, Martin, that the best lesson a man gets, and one that goes straightest to his heart, is when he looks across the field and sees the fruit of his wild oats; it's not a pleasant prospect, Martin, that reckoning up with the devil. You find you owe him a precious deal more than you expected, and he won't wait your time to pay. It was something this way with me, Martin: I had money, friends, health, and not a soul to control me. The world looked an uncommonly pleasant place. I did not see behind the scenes then, as I did in after times. The tinsel and paint soon wear off; and the morning view isn't prepossessing, particularly if tears have been making rivulets during the dark hours. I cannot quite go into all the past; I may some day, but the time has not come yet.

I took longer to get through my wild oats than most men. And there was less excuse for me too; for I had one to keep me straight, God help her! She tried hard, though she never seemed to strike the right cord. You'll hardly believe me, Martin, but it's nothing more than the truth, the hand that turned me into the new road, that tore the veil from my eyes, and made me see the fruit of what I had been so long busy about, was that of one of those your saints would tuck up their dresses at, and pass on the other side of the pavement.

"I'll tell you how it was if you'll lower the light; my eyes are dancing already. Well! about sixteen years ago, I was down in the fever, what sort I know not. All I do know is that for months my senses were taken from me, although my bodily strength came back. The people I had been living with turned me out; for you know we

don't boast of lunatic asylums in such out-of-the-way places as these, and I was left to wander the face of the earth as miserable an object as you could well imagine. Somehow or other a poor girl, who I had done a good turn for in better days, fell in with me, and like a true-hearted woman had pity on me when she saw my state, and actually left the family who had given her a home, to go and look after me. For weeks and weeks she followed me, watching that I did no harm to myself, and taking care of me as if I had been her child. As soon as my brain began to get right again I had another illness, but though it brought me nearer death than before, I thanked God for it, it gave me back my reason. It's a strange feeling, Martin, awaking to consciousness after a waking sleep, such as mine. You've lost sight of the world's time, and seem to begin life

over again. My change was strange. I'd left Norfolk Island (I had no notion how), in my madness, and got to New Zealand, where poor Anna had seen and recognized me. Well, Martin, on that bed of sickness when my very soul seemed sinking, I began to turn to better thoughts. The girl, God help her! herself dying by inches, never rested until she got me to see what a mad fool I had been. It was she pointed back to the field of oats, then to the present harvest, and at last forward to the eternity to come. I did not like it, my boy, it was an ugly reckoning day to live for, as I said before, but worse still to hurry on by dying, and I set about trying how I might be happier. It was a long struggle, but Anna sat watching and putting in a word now and then, getting paler and more death-like every day; until at last when she was reading to me one day, she suddenly put

her hand to her heart, and gave a short gasp.

"'It's all over, friend,' she said, as soon as the spasm was gone; 'another will kill me; before it comes kneel down and pray for me.' I had not knelt for years, not since I left England; but I did so now, and was in the middle of the Lord's prayer, when she fell forward stone-dead. Since then, Martin, I've found out what life is worth, and am trying to live out my wild oats, by sowing fresh seed and rooting up the wild; and by God's grace I think I am getting on in the right way at last. Now, Martin, you think I've no right to preach, I dare say. I see it by your face boy, so don't deny it. I am not surprised, you may be right, but experience of good and evil gives a right to judge. I've only given you the benefit of my judgment. You'll find plenty of times it may be useful;

so don't forget it, little as it is, if you can help yourself. Think before you act of the long future, and whether you are laying up remorse and self-reproach for your old age, when the world's face has lost all its beauty, and looks as it must to most of us wrinkled, withered, and repulsive enough. The roses have been succeeded by rouge, the rouge has rubbed off, and behold the difference.

"You think me moralizing, Martin, but don't forget our last talk. Now, God bless you, my boy! I will not see you in the morning; don't ask me why; I'd rather say good-bye to-night. We shall meet again, never fear, when least expecting it, most likely. Remember you write home, and make her your father-confessor. Tell her all. Don't gloss over your sins. Let her know everything; and when you go home for her, there'll be nothing to blush for."

I did not sleep much that night, and

was up and off by daybreak, a guide waiting for me at the outskirts of the town. As I had three or four days' walk before me, I did not hurry myself, but taking it leisurely, made as much use of the opportunity as possible, both in prospecting the nature of the country, and the disposition of such of the natives as I might chance to fall in with.

The first day's journey brought me across rather an unpromising country,—flat, sandy, and poor. Cultivation has materially altered the face of nature; at the time I speak of it was by no means tempting. The second day we fell in with a native pah, and finding the chief "on hospitable thoughts intent," consented to partake of his good fare, and sleep under the shelter of a roof. These tribes differ considerably from those further south, and are neither so full-grown nor so active. They have professedly become Christians,

though for what purpose is, to my unprejudiced eye and judgment, pretty evident, as they never see a white man without regularly making a trade of their religion, being sharp enough to find out whether they would please their visitor most by psalm-singing or swearing.

They had plenty of brandy and rum for sale, and a very fair knowledge of how to use it too, as the chief got gloriously drunk, and was groaning and sobbing with the after results when I bid him farewell next morning. This gentleman was one of those for whose edification the treaty of Waitanga was afterwards drawn up.

Next day, at sunset, we reached the Hokianga river, and slept at a mission station, where I found a well-built log-house, surrounded by a pretty garden, and was entertained by the missionary and his wife with as good a supper as any one need wish, finished

up by tea and coffee, in dear old home-like cups.

I gained a good deal of information here as to the doings of the natives, and the prospect of success settlers might expect. Land was to be had in abundance, but heavily timbered and expensive to clear. The timber itself, consisting principally of the valuable Kauri pine, was being destroyed wholesale, as the sailors who came for spars often cut down a dozen before they settled upon one they approved, and then the rest were left to rot. The missionary also shewed me several beautiful specimens of the native woods, which, having a little knowledge of carpentering and turning, he had polished and made into various useful little articles, intending to send them to England, by way of attracting attention to what might prove a fertile source of export wealth from the colony.

The climate up here was charming, some-

thing like Madeira, with a very slight variation in the cold and heat. The cottage garden served to prove the warmth and equability most conclusively, as cactus plants, mignionette, aud mimosa grow side by side, while orange-trees formed the hedge-rows. Potatoes and peas seemed to form the staple stock of vegetables, and, indeed, food, as, saving pigs, I saw nothing in the form of a four-footed animal, a great drawback, no doubt, but one patiently borne. The missionary and his wife said they had often been promised sheep and cows, but no one ever seemed to think it necessary to keep the promise. One cat they had had, but it died of old age some months before. The natives insisted upon interring it in the native fashion, making up their minds it was a species of god, and nothing would satisfy them to the contrary. The district north of this had as yet been little known. The chief settler, a

gentleman named Souter, is located a good distance north, near the valley of Awaroa, one of the most fertile, I was told, in New Zealand. It seems Mr. Souter employs the natives as labourers, and by their help has cleared and cultivated a large tract of land. I was sorry I had not thought of paying a visit to him, but it was too late then, so I was forced to leave it till a more convenient time, taking, however, a letter of introduction from my missionary friend in case I ever made the proposed trip to his settlement.

The Mangamaka river enlarges considerably as it approaches Hokianga harbour, and vessels of moderate size can pass easily ten or twelve miles up. The banks generally slope off to wooded hills, covered with kauri pine. The estuary, or harbour of Hokianga itself, is very pretty, more resembling the Loch-Lomond than anything else I can liken it

to. Steep wooded hills rise and enclose it on every side except one. And when I got there the delusion was increased by a regular Scotch mist, no uncommon thing here, as I found during my short sojourn. A number of sawyers and wood-traders have located themselves on the shores of the estuary, for the purpose of preparing the kauri logs for exportation. It was also the seat of the first Wesleyan mission, and the pretty little cottages of the settlers looked particularly snug and home-like, encircled, as many of them were, by gardens in full bloom.

All the natives here profess Christianity, and were apparently upon the best terms with the strangers. A numerous progeny of half-breds was springing up to cement the union; and altogether had my mind not been so bent upon the south coast, I should have been inclined to stay and try my luck at this pretty, quiet spot. As it was, finding a

timber ship ready to start for Sydney, I persuaded the captain to run down the coast first and land me as near the Wanganui as possible, from which place I knew I could make my way to Wellington.

I had another reason too in wishing to revisit a scene of so much importance, namely, the hope of hearing some tidings of Black, whom I was determined to follow up, and, if possible, bring to account.

We accordingly bore out from the Hokianga, and catching a fair breeze, made good way until off the mouth of Manukau harbour, when the wind changing suddenly with a threatening of a gale, the captain ran into the harbour to wait till it was over, a proceeding all in my favour, as I was anxious to see all I could of the country, and land. The Manukau harbour struck me as the finest I had yet seen; and when, in after days, Governor Hobson fixed upon it as the site

of the capital, although, like many other southern settlers, I was cruelly disappointed, I could not but feel he had, as a perfectly unprejudiced man, chosen the fittest spot; for not only, as is now well known, does Auckland possess a splendid harbour on the west, but on the east, too, she commands one of the finest in the world, and on this account has not inappropriately been called the Modern Corinth.

It would be useless on my part to dwell upon any description of the harbour. Every one has read all about it, and as I shall have many occasions to recur to it during my life, I shall let it develop itself by degrees.

We got out to sea again the second day, and again caught a favourable wind. The captain, however, not knowing this part of the coast line, and fearful of meeting another gale, kept out to sea for a conside-

rable time, so managing, whether by accident or design I know not, to sight the land off the mouth of the Mokau river first, and in spite of my protestations to the contrary, insisted upon that being the landing-place agreed upon in our compact. Remonstrance was in vain. I had not made out an agreement in writing, and being alone, had nothing to support my cause, so that after attempting to argue with him, I was compelled to take it as easily as I could, and having settled my bill by a draught upon the house I was to bank with in Sydney, I got into the boat, and without more ado, was landed at the mouth of the Mokau.

Here I found the natives, the Waikatos, assembled in great numbers and in a state of immense excitement, and soon learnt that an agent of the New Zealand Company was expected every day, and consequently they had met together to discuss the sale of their

land, and were evidently determined to make as good a bargain as possible. Thinking I should fall in with the agent I got a guide, and set off down the coast, looking out carefully for any signs of a traveller, but I reached the mouth of the Wanganui without meeting with him. Here, however, the natives told me Colonel Wakefield and a whole ship-full of the company's servants had been there on their way to the north.

Many and divers were the reports as to the sale of land, one party asserting that the New Zealand Company had purchased the whole through the agency of E. Kuri, a chief of the inhabiting tribe; the other, that the Waikato conquerors had sold it to the missionaries: a Mr. White, who had lately visited the place, indeed left a paper to that effect.

Not very sanguine as to the results of a dispute upon such a tender point, I began to have my doubts as to whether I should

ever build my home on the lovely Wanganui, and as the future will prove, my thoughts were only prophetic, unforeseen circumstances leading me far from my first destination.

Although I made the most minute inquiry with regard to Black's previous history, I could only learn, and *that* principally from the white settlers, that he had appeared among them two or three years previously, bringing Clari with him. He had taken part in their reckless spendthrift life, without any repulse, spending his money freely, and though disliked by them all for his overbearing manner, not suspected to be worse than the usual run, until a circumstance occurred that explained to me Tom's antipathy.

It seemed Tom had taken French leave of his ship while she lay off the mouth of the river, and swimming on shore, threw himself upon the mercy of the settlers, who, being no

great sticklers at such unlawful practices, gave him an asylum until the vessel set sail, when he went to the south island and fell in with a native girl, who seems to have exercised great influence over him, as he remained with her tribe for several years. But being of a roving disposition, and having pleasant reminiscences of the friends he had met on the Wanganui, in an evil day he had made up his mind to return and settle there, taking his native wife with him.

A short time after his arrival he fell in with Black. They became great friends, and for a time all went well. At last the mine exploded—Tom found Black had seduced his wife. Though mad from jealousy and anger, he managed to conceal his suspicions till he found them together, when, perfectly frantic, he first stabbed the unhappy girl, then turned like a madman upon Black, who, however, being the most powerful man of the two,

besides having the advantage of being collected, while Tom grew more and more excited each minute, and was thus left at the mercy of Black, who soon finished the business and walked away, leaving Tom to all appearance dead. Before leaving the spot, however, he dragged the body of the native girl to the river bank, tied a large stone round her waist, and threw her in.

When Tom came to himself his first feeling was remorse; and as soon as he could move he began looking about for any trace of his wife. He found her body; he dragged it out of the river and buried it, then left the place without attempting to see any of his friends, and since that day until he came with me had never visited the spot. Black, too, disappeared for a time, but came back during the whaling season; and being particularly liberal with his money and company, soon wiped out the remembrance of

old scores, and had the first voice in all local matters.

I went up to see the ruins of the hut, but so great is the force of vegetation, that except one or two upright posts, not a sign of a habitation remained. The spot had returned to all its primitive loveliness; the river gurgled by in one broad silvery stream; the breeze sighed through the ever-green trees around, waving the tall, graceful ferns, and singing a soft, low strain of melody among the branches. The bright sunlight poured down; not a shadow remained to bear witness of the crime and misery the spot could have told of.

The image of Clari returned with tenfold force, and I absolutely shuddered as I felt the influence of the spell with which she had bound me. Even yet, except for a moment, I could scarcely believe that she could have been acting. Perhaps she was not alto-

gether—I thought not. Yet the thought was no comfort to me or excuse for her; it only made her crime the deeper, and my shame the more stinging. Well might Trevor say I should shed tears of blood for my sin. It had found me out already.

CHAPTER VIII.

INTO CIVILIZED LIFE AGAIN.

ALTHOUGH in writing of Port Nicholson I called the town established there Wellington, it was, in reality so named only about the time of my present arrival. Easy as it may seem to those who have not had any experience of it, nothing is more difficult than to describe the rise and progress of a settlement in a new country. People at home who grumble at a change from one comfortable well-built house to another, where fresh paper, paint, &c. greet them on their first arrival,

have little notion of the disorder, discomfort, and misery of landing upon a houseless shore, where the trees that are to form a shelter from wind and weather are still waving in all their native majesty. I saw a good example of this on the day I reached Wellington, as a large emigrant ship had anchored the preceding night, and was discharging her living cargo upon the beach. I suppose that, arriving at the same time, I was taken by the older settlers for one of the new-comers, for an old man shortly came up to me, and after peering in my face for some time, said—

"Hast thou any family, friend?"

"No, I'm not married," I replied. "But why?"

"Then if thou wilt thou canst partake of my hut for a season. I have but my daughter and her husband and grandchild, and thou shalt be welcome."

Rather startled by the offer, I thanked him

warmly, but said I had no right to burden his hospitality, as I had not come in the vessel, but had been months in the country, and was only waiting for the governor's return, that I might be put in possession of the tract of land I had already purchased. The old man smiled.

"Thou mayst have been months in the country, but thou art young to its habits, or thou wouldst understand how much more welcome such a declaration would make thee. If thou art richer than I thou canst pay me for thy board. Nevertheless, that can be arranged hereafter. Thou art lucky to have money and no family, — no one to fret for. Men can endure cold, hunger, and want of shelter, but what can women and children do, without a roof over their heads? It is all those who have them can do to share them for a while. Wilt thou come?"

"If I come you will not have room to shelter others who may need it more."

"Yes, friend, thou shalt not be in the way. Come, let us seek some one who requires it too."

The people, who were crowding round, gazing with excited, wondering faces about them, and asking innumerable questions, the principal being as to accommodation, were both old and young, hopeful and downcast, tears in some eyes, smiles on many faces; here a family already piling up their trunks to form a shelter, from which they would hang a tarpaulin, and make an impromptu tent sufficient if the weather kept as at present, but not much protection against the hurricanes that so frequently visit the bay. Others, again, were wandering disconsolately about, asking everybody's advice, but taking none, making no effort whatever to better the present, and abusing every one and everything

about them. It was ludicrous but truly pitiable to watch or listen to the complaints of such people, who had evidently come out with the idea that they were to find comfortable hotels or lodgings all ready to walk into, and without the slightest conception as to what the difficulties and privations of an emigrant's life really are at starting.

No one ought to think of emigrating without calmly and quietly taking into consideration the sort of life he must begin with. No one, I suppose, leaves England for a new country unless with the idea that they are going to better themselves and increase their fortune; cares and anxieties are to be left behind in the over-populated old country; all this is, strictly and honestly speaking, perfectly true, yet there must be, as every calm-judging, sensible person will own, many trials to face at the outset of the new kind of life. And though these trials gradually

fade away before industry and good management, it *must* be a matter of time—aye, and patience, too—before the every-day comforts of the old country can be attained. It is at the starting-point that so many fall short of what is required.

In all my experience of colonial life I never saw a persevering, hearty, and steady emigrant fail to do well. A few years must see him the possessor of a piece of ground and a house; not, remember, only as tenant, which would have been the height of his ambition at home, but as *the owner*, blessed with the knowledge that every acre he wins from its primeval state he can leave with all its improvements to his children, who with many a coming generation will learn to bless and revere his name as the first in the prosperous country, where labour and determination are lords of the land, wealth is within the power of all who will work for it; and

the motto not only of Auckland but of all New Zealand must ever be, "Onward!"

After watching the landing of the emigrants, and picking up a young Irishman, who, having been down with the fever during the voyage, seemed less fit than most of the others to hold up against the outsetting difficulties, I accompanied my new friend, whose name I found to be Abel Wilson, to his cottage, as snug a specimen of a log hut as I had ever seen.

Here I was introduced to his daughter and son-in-law, and a lovely little child of three years old. They seemed a homely kind-hearted family, abiding by the good old rules, "to do as you would be done by," and "to do good to all men." They had only one room empty, and in this the Irishman and myself were to 'locate' ourselves, I paying a pound a week for its use, he proposing to work out his share with the son, who though

a sawyer by trade had purchased a few acres of land, which he was, after his regular working hours, reclaiming and planting.

Lately, however, sawing work had been so plentiful and well paid for, that no progress had been made with what they proudly called the farm. Thus, to verify the proverb, "it's an ill wind that blows nobody good," they had actually stumbled on the very man they wanted. Dick Callaghan was not likely to be fit for a situation for some time, and mean while was only too glad to earn bed and board by working with the old man. Nothing loath to lend a hand either, I soon won golden opinions from them all, by making good use of any spare time I had; and as I could settle none of my own private matters until the return of Colonel Wakefield, I got through a good spell of work. One or two journeys I made up the "Hutt" valley convinced me as to its beauty and richness, as well as the

prospect of its becoming one of the most valuable tracts yet purchased; still it was too confined and limited for my taste, and I resolved to wait patiently, and see what effect the rumoured appointment of a governor would have. Besides, I was in expectation of hearing from Miny, to whose influence I had deferred, and several months must still elapse before I could receive an answer to the letter upon which I felt hung all my future fate.

When Colonel Wakefield returned, he brought news of the certainty of government being about to take the colony under its own immediate jurisdiction, and that there was every reason to believe the governor appointed to act in Her Majesty's behalf was already upon his way.

Great was the excitement with which this was listened to, one side predicting success, the other foreboding everything that was gloomy or unhappy, asserting, that the government,

never having shown the Company any real favour, would be sure to ignore all their purchases, and would be cajoled by the natives into repurchasing the land from any one coming forward and claiming possession; this, if really carried out, would bring in its train dissatisfaction, reprisals, and even bloodshed.

The clergy who accompanied the emigrants were vehemently opposed to the first missionaries as a body; and now the news eached us that Governor Hobson had indeed arrived, and not only arrived, but already taken a most important step towards establishing the authority of the British Crown, namely by calling an assembly, and proclaiming a treaty drawn up by himself and the missionaries; according to which treaty the land was placed solely under the power of the government, no one else having the power to purchase, all past transactions, except they passed throngh

government hands, being null and void, and the chiefs were to be acknowledged as sole proprietors and owners of every foot of ground, with liberty to sell or not as suited their cupidity or wants.

Such was the groundwork of the treaty of Waitanga. The older settlers cried out against its manifest injustice and partiality, and the chiefs who were principally concerned did not in the least comprehend what they had done; but when told that they had sold their rights, were perfectly indignant, asserting they had only given the Queen the power of helping them, or in other words entered into a strict alliance with her representatives.

It may be imagined that the croakers among the company had it now pretty much their own way; and good use they made of their time; for very shortly afterwards our worst fears were realized by the government declining to acknowledge the Company's demand for a certain quantity of land guaranteed

to them upon its formation by Lord John Russell ; nay, more, a hint was given that even the purchases made and entered on were illegal, and would at the earliest date be subject to a strict inquiry, superintended by a gentleman appointed by a board instituted for the exclusive purpose of investigating and settling all land or property disputes. Such was the panic that siezed many of the settlers, that had it not been for the determined conduct of Colonel Wakefield, and the great trust felt in him, numbers of those who had purchased small tracts, and were busily clearing them, would have emigrated, and abandoning the work done, gone to build new homes in the more favoured colony of Australia.

Colonel Wakefield's active and expansive mind at once grasped the difficulty, and, calling a meeting, he addressed them in a short, pithy speech, every word of which must have sunk into their inmost hearts, bidding them

stand up for their rights, assuring them that justice would be sure to be done them. After this the same routine of daily work went on as if nothing had happened, though, from the eager faces, and questions when any news was believed to have arrived, it was evident that the calm only lay upon the surface, and that a single harsh breath would cause the waves to storm and rave as before.

Highly approving of my plans, Colonel Wakefield promised to give me the first offer of any suitable land he met with, especially recommending my favourite place the Wanganui.

I was so comfortable with the Wilsons that I never thought of changing my quarters, and lent them a willing hand whenever I was at liberty. The Irishman had meantime recovered, and fallen in for a situation with a farmer on the middle island.

Several emigrant ships had arrived, and,

consequently, the little town had been rapidly growing in wealth and importance. The shores presented a marvellously heterogeneous mixture of stone and log houses and tents, while the whole valley of the Hutt resounded to the sharp stroke of the axe mingled with the song and laugh of the workmen, who seemed to have no lack of health and spirits, and, while busy, at least, little inclination to wrangle.

It was now a matter of great importance to get more room. Settlers were continually arriving and looking in vain for a location. But enterprise was held in check by another great point of consideration, which was, as to what part Governor Hobson would select as the site of the capital of the colony. Wellington possessed many advantages, and, of course, her claims were warmly advocated by the Company, who forgot her manifest disadvantages in the prospect of increased wealth

and importance, making up their minds that there could be no doubt as to the future capital, and so blinding their minds, that when the intelligence arrived that Governor Hobson had selected a spot known to a very few, even by name, many hundred miles to the South, and where as yet there was no settlement, the indignation was eclipsed by the surprise; the news perfectly astounding and overwhelming the company's emigrants, for several days was questioned and attempted to be disbelieved, until there remained no doubt to cling to.

Then a perfect torrent of reproach broke forth, and utterly ignoring the possibility of the Governor having any reason for his unpopular selection, they openly accused him of acting merely from spite and revenge—oblivious of the fact that they themselves were not a government body, and therefore until incorporated by royal charter, strictly speak-

ing, interlopers, they still cried out loudly and bitterly against the imagined injustice, and talked largely of petitioning the home authorities to cancel Governor Hobson's choice, and have himself superseded, on the ground of imcompetence, and abuse of public trust.

Poor Colonel Wakefield, though undoubtedly much disappointed at the turn affairs were taking, behaved with the most perfect serenity and firmness. He knew there was no use attempting to make himself heard until the thunder of the first storm had rolled by, so wisely remained silent. The lull came at last, when the excited and angry immigrants, pausing for breath, began to see what empty boasts and threats they had been giving vent to, and were ready to slink quietly back to their fields and clearings without waiting for an answer to their wild bombast.

At this moment Colonel Wakefield came forward, and while lamenting his and their

disappointment, pointed out the position and natural advantages of the spot chosen by the Governor, promising that Wellington would only be second in importance, and probably first, for many a year, in wealth, population, and prosperity.

CHAPTER IX.

HOPE DEFERRED MAKETH THE HEART SICK.

WHAT a different thing Christmas seems in a climate where it comes in the middle of summer, sunshine and harvest. Now as in New Zealand the seasons are exactly reversed, December corresponding to the English midsummer, Christmas came upon the New Zealand colonists in what certainly did at first seem an unnatural manner. This, however, being my second Christmas in the colony, I could afford to laugh at the lamentations I heard on every side, and eat my

roast beef and plum pudding with just as much relish as if the snow had been lying a foot deep upon the ground, and holly and misletoe garnishing the room, instead of the glowing white creepers and coral-like bunches of the *roto*. Dancing upon the grass finished up the evening, and verily young as our little colony was, we had no lack of beauty. For there seemed something so invigorating and healthy in the atmosphere, that added to the complete freedom from the manifold cares and anxieties, which had surrounded most if not all of the emigrants in the old country, the female portion seemed to become younger and prettier every day; while the pale cheeks and languid frames with which many of the younger women had landed, were soon replaced by the rosy glow of health, and a life of activity they would never have known except in such a climate. Oh! how I longed to see Miny's bright face

gaining new beauty in this favoured land; but alas! ship after ship had come in, letters had arrived for all, and even business letters for myself, but not one word from Miny or Slyndhurst. A thousand misgivings began to fill my heart, and that too in spite of my determination not to despond or give up hope until I received an answer to the letter I had written from the Bay of Islands, and to do this a couple of months must still pass by. In the meanwhile I watched with an anxiety few can realize, the arrival of every vessel, hoping against hope; trying to imagine all sorts of excuses for the non-appearance of the longed-for news. And the keen-eyed old post-mistress of Slyndhurst, came in for a good deal more blame with regard to letter-opening, than even she deserved. Miny's constancy, in spite of Clari's visions, I never doubted. I forgot that while I, alone in the world and without a single

relative to cling to or love, had centred every wish of my life upon Miny, she had father, mother, brothers and sisters to divide the heart she gave me. Again, that while I had left my native land associating with its happiest and fondest recollections, the days I had been with her; that while her smile mingled with and brightened the sunny days of the English summer, her song and laugh, the clear days and long happy evenings of winter, until England was one with Miny, Miny one with England. I forgot, I say, that though it was thus with me, she was still at home, still surrounded by a hundred home duties, and pleasures, still saw the same kind faces, had her griefs comforted by the same dear voices, and that one day followed another in the even routine of life. Whatever came—I had no right to blame her, she might dread the undefined future; she could not as I had done, see and weigh

the advantages of colonial life, against its disadvantages, and learn that although for a short time a delicately nurtured woman might with good enough reason think she had many hardships and privations to meet and suffer, she would soon forget these in the duties and interests of her new style of life, and would not willingly return to the constraints or even luxury of the old world. Health, one, if not the greatest, of earthly blessings, is not to be lightly set aside, and freedom from the usual "ills that flesh is heir to," amply compensates in the eyes of any sensible woman for the loss of many luxuries, rendered necessary by a lower state of health. But enough of this, a colonist has no time to sentimentalize.

Life and gaiety seemed the order of the day at Wellington. The harvest was going on well, the crops looking as flourishing as fine weather and virgin soil could make

them. The rush of emigrants had brought so many hands ready and willing to work, that houses and streets had sprung up in a magical way. Even a few shops gave an old country look to the thoroughfares. Every man not employed in clearing or otherwise establishing his own farm, or home, could find work at wages beginning from twenty shillings a week, with board, and although provisions and such like were very dear, and the real value of the money thus lowered, still a man could not only live comfortably, but in a short time lay by enough money to trade with, or invest as might seem good to himself.

By the advice of a lawyer I came across, I had drawn a few hundreds and invested at ten per cent., leaving my capital to be used when necessary in the purchase and clearing, &c., of my proposed farm. Many of the first emigrants had acted in a similar

manner. Others carried on a regular trading business along the coast, freighting small vessels with blankets, groceries, and clothing, to exchange for pigs, potatoes, kauri gum, &c., often driving a very lucrative business, not to speak of its freedom and excitement. I accompanied a friend upon one or two excursions, and never enjoyed anything more.

It was upon my return from the second of these, that I found a letter waiting for me. It was from Miny; but alas! when I looked at the date I found it had been written only a fortnight after I had left England; consequently was almost more tantalizing than if it had never reached me. Of course there was nothing new to me. It was filled with lamentations for my departure, good wishes from old friends, and an exact account of her mother's health. I read it with a strange longing, a sort of curiosity to see what she would say, what warm love would break

forth when she was committing her thoughts to paper; but I was disappointed, and folded up the long-wished-for epistle with a vague feeling that I was lonelier than ever. I cannot tell why—for the letter was warm, loving and true—yet there was something wanting, and from that hour my heart began to sink within me with a dread of some approaching trial or grief. Care took possession of me; nothing would banish it, excitement might drown it for a time, but it came back sterner and closer than ever. I now watched the chances of news, much with the same sort of feeling as I should imagine a murderer waits a delayed sentence. But still the weeks rolled into months, autumn and then winter crept slowly by, and still nothing came. I wrote regularly to Mr. Cary, but steadfastly avoided speaking of the mental agony I was enduring, making light, poor fool that I was, of the most serious things

about me, and telling of pleasures and reckless scenes of adventure and dissipation I never in truth had an inclination to share in, but behind which I attempted to veil the true state of my mind. How well I succeeded the future too plainly proved.

Towards the beginning of September, when spring was again bringing hard farm-work, and consequently a great stir of life and bustle in the settlement, an emigrant vessel arrived. As usual I was among the first on board; only however, as of yore, to leave with another link attached to the chain of disappointment that was fast making me a reckless, hopeless, and irritable man. As I was leaving the ship's deck, a young man came up to me, and addressing me by name, said he had brought a letter of introduction from Frank Cary, and hoped I should be able to give him some information, especially where to go and what to

do on first landing. Snatching the letter from his hands, and perfectly unconscious of what he was talking about, I tore it open, and read it eagerly through, glancing on from line to line in search of one dear name, but it was not there, and with a confused sensation that all was over, and without understanding a single word throughout the whole closely written sheet, I crushed it in my hand, and forgetting all about the bearer, turned away.

"Pardon me, Mr. Tobin," said a voice behind me, "I hope I am not the bearer of bad news."

Remembering what I was doing, and the fool's part I must appear to be playing to the new arrival, who, except being the bearer, had nothing to do with the news itself, I turned and held out my hand, saying,

"You must excuse me. Frank's letter is only the second I have received since I left

England, nearly two years ago, and contains so much that is new and startling, that I forgot you."

He laughed—"Not flattering if you knew me better; but I don't wonder; I've had home-sickness already, and half regretted that I had chosen such a life. Frank and I are or were great chums, and when I was trying to find out how to distinguish barley from wheat, a fat ox from a lean one, I went down to spend a few weeks at the rectory. So pray consider me as a sort of animated newspaper. I dare say I shall be able to furnish you with more intelligence than master Frank, who was too tenderly engaged during my sojourn to give many thoughts to his male friends."

A terrible suspicion flashed across me, but I dare not ask the simple question that sprang to my lips. I offered my new acquaintance,

whose name I found to be Richard Hyde, a share of my own quarters until he either found better, or made up his mind as to the future. So together we left the vessel, and leaving directions with a handy fellow I knew as to the boxes, &c., in the hold, set off for the house where I had established myself, after leaving my first home with the good Quakers.

As we walked along, Hyde kept glancing eagerly about, the expression of his face varying every moment, but he said little, leaving all the conversation to me. I saw how it was, and felt none the less prepossessed in his favour; but knowing he would speak at last when he had taken stock of all the objects about him, I talked on, describing colonial fast or slow life, just as the thought struck me.

Two or three friends we met, and to whom I introduced Hyde, gave him a hearty wel-

come, which I saw made a great impression. And last, though not least, just as we came in sight of my house, Colonel Sinclair's two daughters cantered past, dressed, as they always were, in the true old English costume. I looked at Hyde's face, and almost laughed outright, as I saw the look of relief that passed over it, the next minute, however, to be banished by the sight of a tattooed and blanketed Maori driving a noisy, self-willed young pig to the market.

My cottage was as fair a specimen of colonial erection as need be, and consisted of four rooms, with a kitchen, &c., and what is not usual, though very useful, four small attics, which in an emergency did duty as bedchambers for my native or whaling friends. A garden of a couple of acres surrounded the house, and there English flowers, fruits,

and vegetables held their well-known places. Hyde followed me into the sitting-room, and throwing himself into an arm-chair, burst into a loud fit of laughter.

"By Jove, Tobin, what fools we all were in England! Why, they imagine at home that I shall have to sleep in a cave or tent, dine off some unheard-of wild beast or stale fish, learn to speak Maori, amd dress after some barbarous fashion. Well, on the contrary, the first thing I see is a lovely bay, with white cottages all about the shores; then an Englishman, *clothed, and in his right mind;* next, two properly clad young damsels, who actually did not stare, and did bow as they do in civilized countries; then a little cot with a perfect wilderness of flowers, a snuggery with pictures and arm-chairs. If these are the hardships of a colonial life, I don't pity myself for being a

younger son. You don't happen to have a bootjack, do you?"

Rather surprised and much amused, I pointed to one I had employed my carpentering knowledge in making some days previously.

"Marvellous!" ejaculated Mr. Hyde, and throwing himself back in his chair, he laughed loud and long. At last he consented to stop and answer my puzzled looks.

"You look as if you thought I'd left what sanity I possessed on board ship, Tobin. 'Pon my word, if I could have caught that expression I should have made my fortune in the portrait line. But as I am not quite such a fool as I seem, I'll explain. A few days before I sailed, my eldest brother, who, lucky fellow, falls into the whole estate, said to me, 'When you write and tell me you've got a bootjack, I'll believe you are becoming

civilized;' and there, in the first room I enter under the first roof, and on the very first day in New Zealand, behold the acknowledged emblem of civilization. But——" and he stopped suddenly and looked down at my boots, which were of a rather thicker build than his own, "seriously, what's the use of a bootjack? You cannot wear tight boots out here. An old uncle of mine, gouty and bunioned, and who, *entre nous*, considers the family have barely escaped utter ruin, by getting your humble servant packed off to the other side of the world; well, this old gentleman presented me with three dozen pairs of his old boots,— cloth, with black buttons. I brought them with me, and mean to make them over to the first chief I meet."

While upon the subject of the boots, I may as well mention that their owner actually did

put this determination into force, and I saw several of my New Zealand friends strutting about in them, much like cats upon walnut-shells.

CHAPTER X.

ALL OVER.

DICK HYDE proved a great acquisition to my establishment; and as a proof, one example will suffice. Finding I was obliged to dine at an eating-house, where the cooking was by no means first-rate, he installed himself as head cook at home, and with the help of a small boy who did the dirty work occasionally, turned out a capital little dinner; so much so, that whenever any of my bachelor friends wanted to display their hospitality, Dick Hyde and I were sure of an invite, and a gridiron flanked

by a saucepan always marked his post of honour.

When I first took Dick home with me, I imagined I should soon hear as much as I wished as to Slyndhurst and Miny, but I was such a veritable coward and had so persuaded myself that all was over, and let the strange vision by Lake Taupo so take possession of my mind, that whenever he approached the subject I warded it off. Day after day went by; secretly I was in a fever of impatience and curiosity, but as a mother watching by the sick bed of a child longs but fears to ask the doctor for the final sentence, from an unacknowledged conviction that it must crush even the shadow of the hope that still bears her up; even so from day to day, and week to week, I drove off the blow I knew must come some time.

At first Dick took no notice of my dislike to speak of old days; but after repeated

efforts on his part to get in a word as to home news and equally positive ones on my part to avoid such, he began to see I had some reason for so doing, and never once referred to the subject. Up to this time I had kept a sort of rough diary—it was a promise to Miny—and in it I jotted down not only hasty sketches of my experience in the country, but when particularly despondent put in black and white a few of my private reflections.

One day while talking over the prospect of Hyde's settling, and weighing the advantages of various districts, I was called away upon some business, and gave him my diary open at the portion in which I had, partly for my own amusement, partly for the sake of reporting to Colonel Wakefield, made some calculations and contrasts relating to the subject we were debating upon. About an hour after I returned, and found Dick in a

brown study. He held the book in his hand, and waiting until I had seated myself and lighted my pipe preparatory to a quiet evening, then he handed my book across, saying—

"I don't know whether you'll blame me or not, Tobin. I didn't know that was a private diary, and I read some things without thinking what I was doing. Will you let me tell you all I know about Frank Cary? I think you should, old fellow. You know there is no merit in wilfully shutting one's eyes to the truth."

It was coming now. I looked in Dick's kindly face, now as earnest and gentle as a girl's, and saw there what I might expect.

"Well, Dick," I said, with a wretched attempt at carelessness, "out with it. I know it's not pleasant, that's the truth; and if I had not been such a coward I should

have asked you to make a clean breast of it long ago; but a fellow don't like cutting off his own hand."

Dick nodded.

"Where am I to begin?" he asked. "If you'd not mind just telling me a few heads of your life at Slyndhurst and what you are most interested in hearing or not hearing, I should have a chance of seeing my way. Except what I suspect, I'm in the dark altogether."

I told him in as few words as I could my position with regard to Dr. Cary and Miny, making no comment on anything that had happened since I left England.

"Ah! I thought as much," he said, blowing a tremendous cloud of smoke; "now listen to me. I was at college with Frank. For the first term I liked him uncommonly, and we became sworn friends, then gradually, I hardly know how, I began to feel cooler. He was not altogether above board, that's the

fact; and accidentally I came across one or two rather dirty transactions; not anything I had any right to interfere with, or we should have had a blow up, but just enough to rub the gloss off. Now, as I dare say you've found out, I haven't two faces; if I say a thing, I mean it; and if I feel a thing, I might as well try to hold my tongue as to hide it. So when the third term came Frank and I had mutually drawn off; he had nominally taken to reading, and I—there's no use denying it—was going at a hand-gallop to the devil,—a ride which ended somewhat abruptly in my dismissal from the classic shades of Oxford, and more recently in my appearance in these parts. After leaving college the governor got me into the Colonial Office, and there I became alive to the fact that such a place as New Zealand existed. So, when I found dad in a peculiarly tender mood, I hinted at the possibility of my emi-

grating, adding a few impromptu anecdotes as to the cannibal propensities of the inhabitants. My father couldn't stand it, and always came down with the needful; while my mother, God bless her! used to shudder whenever she heard of emigrating. At last, however, an old naval friend of the family went down to the Hall. He had actually seen these realms, and, by Jove! my next attempt at the pathetic, garnished by cannibalism, was met by a regular laugh, and my father actually advised me to go and have a look at the country myself. Circumstances over which I had no control, as they say, had come to a crisis; certain tailors, &c., began to be curiously and pathetically impatient, and wrote touchingly about the large accounts they had to meet. So, much to the paternal surprise, I embraced the offer on condition that all the debts should be paid by my father. Next, it being desirable that I should

have some idea of roughing it, my dear mother proposed I should be sent to Slyndhurst, at which place she had a shuddering recollection of being ill for three or four weeks, and condemned to endure the hardships of an execrable hotel. So to Slyndhurst I went, and to my surprise almost the first man I fell in with was my quondam chum, Frank Cary. I was uncommonly dull and miserable, so had no objection to accept his offer to take up my quarters at the Rectory for a few weeks, and while there, was introduced to the Millards, soon after finding out that the Dr. had attended my mother during her memorable illness. Now I'm coming to the part touching which I want you to be very cool, old fellow, and to remember."

"Never mind moralizing, Dick," I said, interrupting him, "I can bear anything; I am all ready; fire away. You saw Miny Millard there; what did you think of her?"

" Just this," he continued, " that if she'd been fancy-free, I should have fallen in love with her; but—well! to tell you the truth, Tobin, I soon saw the game Master Frank was playing, though for a while he excused himself and said, she was engaged to an old friend of his—I never guessed till to-day who the friend was—and that when this same friend went abroad he entrusted Miny to his care ' He didn't know you, then, as well as I do,' I thought, but it was no affair of mine. His father didn't take any notice, nor did her people; so the lovemaking went on. I will do the girl the justice to believe at first, and in my eyes for an incredibly long time she did not seem to see what Frank was at. Accidentally I heard the first outburst (you won't be angry if I tell you?) she reproached him bitterly for daring to speak of love to her; but he was ready for all that, and grew penitent, threatened to go away, and never see

her again; swore he knew nothing of his own feelings until he heard something that made him pity her; and that indignation at something he hinted at in connection with her lover had opened his eyes. She was startled, but still held out, till he asked her what proof she had of the constancy of him she had promised to marry? I heard him say tauntingly enough, the brute! that she had never received a single letter after you left England."

"I did write letter after letter, and never got but one from her, written a fortnight after I left."

Dick whistled—"Frank's dirty work again; Well! I won't harrass you, old fellow; she wouldn't listen to him about his love then, but heard all he had to say about you. And, in my opinion, if a girl lets another man abuse and sneer at her lover, it's all up with her; and so I soon saw it was. Miny grew pale and grave. The doctor thought she was too

much confined nursing her mother, and wanted to send her away for change, but she would not go. Frank now changed his tactics, watched over her, anticipating every wish, doing all the little kind things a fellow learns to do for a girl he is trying to make love him. Books, music, flowers, anything that would amuse came to the rectory, and were carried over to the doctor's either by Frank or his father, who didn't see what his son was after. When he did, what a scene there was! I hope I shall never be witness to such another. I was sent for by the old man. I found him closeted with Frank, who I saw from a sort of sneer, and paleness about his lips, was in one of his devilish moods.

"'I've sent for you, Mr. Hyde,' said the rector, 'to ask whether you have been an accomplice with my son in this dishonourable and guilty transaction?'

"'Pray explain yourself,' put in Frank,

'you are rather singular in your ideas upon such subjects.'

"'I will explain myself presently,' said his father; 'I mean, in undermining his friend's character, and perverting the affection and truth of the woman who was to have been his wife. I ask, have you had any share in this?"

"'None whatever,' I replied. 'Your son and I have no confidence between us; and, I am happy to say, far from thinking your ideas singular as to the case in question, I entirely and honestly agree with you, that it is the most dishonourable and ungentlemanly action a man can be guilty of, and no man who has done so should I ever call my friend.'

"The rector laid his hand upon my shoulder, saying, 'thank you, Mr. Hyde. Sit down and hear what I am about to say to my son, who has raised up this barrier between himself and my respect.'

"'You may spare yourself the trouble, Sir,' said Frank, rising, 'I want no stranger to judge between us. To you, as my father, I must listen with forbearance; but no other man on earth shall say such words as have just been said without accounting to me for them. I shall leave your house, sir, as my mother did before me. Possibly she found——'

"'Silence!' shouted the rector; 'would you kill me, as well as break my heart, boy, how dare you name ——?' but before he could say further he reeled and fell. Frank gave one look, then passed out of the room, leaving me to do what I could. Poor old man! he had fainted, I thought; but when the doctor came, he said it was paralysis, and talked of excitement and sudden distress. Frank had gone straight to him, I found, and told his own story; and as the old man never spoke again I held my peace."

"Never spoke! Good God!" I exclaimed, "the rector is not dead?"

Dick nodded; "he died a fortnight after the scene."

Tears sprang to my eyes, the dear old man had been like a father to me; the only one I had ever known indeed. The news of a death of a friend whom we had last seen in health and strength, must be at all times and places a shock; but more so ten thousand times when heard in a distant land. One never begins to realize what leaving the old home is, until they hear of death stepping in, and as, one by one, friends or relations are laid in their graves; so, one by one, the links upon the chain that at any distance bind them still to England, seems to give way, and the emigrant feels that he is indeed an exile. I felt myself doubly so. Miny faithless, my only friend dead, what had I in England, and what could England be to me? The very name brought

back sad memories only, blighted hopes and shame. It was well, I thought, that I had left it; well that I had chosen a new land, where I could find new friends, build a home, and make my own name.

Long and bitter was the struggle. Tears would come bitter and burning; they gave no relief, but seemed rather to pour like molten lead upon my heart. Thoughts would travel back to by-gone days, and Miny's face just as I had seen it last, flushed and tear-strained haunted me, her voice ringing in my ears. It was no use shutting my eyes, or putting my hands over my ears, her presence was everywhere, and almost afraid I was losing my senses, I sprang up. The room was nearly dark, only lighted by the moonbeams, and I was alone, for Dick had left me long ago, merely saying, "God bless you, old fellow, you'll be best alone."

I walked up to the window, and throwing

it open, went out on the grass. How different everything looked! How different I felt! Cold, clear, and calm lay the moonlight across the harbour; here and there a fishing boat breaking the scene, one great black mass bespoke a newly arrived emigrant vessel. I started, and wondered how long I had sat thinking, for she must have arrived and anchored since Dick began his story. There was not a single sound in the quiet air, nothing but peace and harmony everywhere, while I, poor suffering wretch, was torn by anger, disappointment, and a fearful longing for revenge. Chafing at the calmness around, I paced hurriedly on, trying to trample under foot, in imagination, all the long hopes and happinesses of the past. Hour after hour passed away, and bareheaded and dissatisfied I still walked on. Even the red streaks of the coming day did not rouse me. I saw nothing, I only felt a wild throbbing at

my heart, and a keen burning pain in my head. Suddenly it grew dark, the atmosphere seemed on fire, and some undefinable but overwhelming fear came upon me, and like a very coward I turned and fled, losing all consciousness as I did so.

CHAPTER XI.

A LITTLE SURPRISE ON WAKING FROM A LONG DREAM.

"COLONEL SINCLAIR'S compliments, and he will be glad to know how Mr. Tobin is," were the first words I was conscious of, after the climax described in the last chapter. I seemed to awake from a long sleep, and was going to jump up and "hollo" an answer to what struck me as some practical joke of Miss Sinclair's, when, to my intense surprise, I felt utterly powerless. My head rose from the pillow, but fell back with a sick swimming

sensation. I put my hand up, but my arm felt as if I'd got the cramp, numb and nerveless. I was perplexed, though not for long, as the conversation I overheard between Miss Sinclair and Dick Hyde soon opened my eyes to the fact that I had had a sharp attack of brain fever, and for the last four or five weeks had been playing a fast and loose game with death. That some length of time had elapsed would have been apparent, independently of the fact being mentioned, from the intimate terms Dick and the lady were evidently upon, and I knew they had barely exchanged a word before.

"Then you'll let papa know the moment he is out of danger," she said, "you know how much we all like him; and this attack has been so dreadfully sudden and unaccountable, though I was sure he was ill for a long time. Papa is going up to the Lake district next month prospecting; Lucy and I are

going with him, and I know he means to take Mr. Tobin as guide, if he only gets strong enough. The doctor raves about the hot springs, and the change you know might cure your friend. Good bye, Mr. Hyde, I see you are going to make a pretty speech about the pleasure, &c. &c. Don't forget your promise. I've left the jelly on the dining-room table. Thank you, I always mount by myself, good-bye;" and the sharp ring of a horse's hoofs told me my fair friend was gone.

"By Jove, she's a regular stunner," soliloquised Dick, "with such a foot and ankle, she'd be the rage in London, and here she is 'Wasting her sweetness on the ——'

Eh! what's that? I always forget poetry. Oh! hang it; never mind; I wish I'd been sick instead of Tobin, just to eat the jelly she makes. What a dear, kind, unaffected girl she is, and such a dainty little figure too!"

He entered my room, and seeing me with my eyes open came up to the bed.

"Better, old chap?" he asked, scanning me anxiously.

"Yes; have I been long bad?" I replied.

"That you have; but, Martin, lad, you're right now. You've given us a precious fright though, and must do as you're bid for a few days. So lie down, I'm head nurse, and Miss Sinclair, who supplies you with confectionary, has established herself as medical adviser under the doctor. There now; don't look excited, lie down, or, rather, lie still. I'll shut the blinds and go out for a pipe. You'll get a sleep if you can. Don't think, if you can help it."

So saying he left me, and I presently felt a delicate insinuating flavour of tobacco stealing through the open window; and, soothed by its fragrance, I fell off into a delightful perceptible doze.

Once the severity of an attack of illness is over, and convalescence begun, the climate of New Zealand admits of no delay; and it is perfectly marvellous how soon health and vigour return. Within a week I was out again, not working, it is true, but still able to sit up or move about as I pleased.

There is nothing like a severe illness except adversity, for shewing true friends, and I had no cause to grumble. As for Dick Hyde, he had nursed me like a woman—saved my life, the doctor said, and I was grateful accordingly. I had liked him from the first, but never knew his true worth or depth of character until now. And from that moment a warmth of friendship sprang up between us that has never known declension.

The Colonel had not forgotten his proposed journey to the lakes; and though to English ladies it may sound a very extraordinary trip or expedition, for two young girls, Miss Sin-

clair and her sister were determined to brave its dangers and hardships.

As soon as I was able to travel, the day for our departure was fixed, the plan of proceeding finally decided upon, and my proposal to guide them up the Wanganui river, thence across the country to Lake Taupo finally decided upon. From Wellington to Wanganui we were to proceed in a small vessel belonging to the Colonel, which I had no doubt would also convey us a considerable distance up the river, and thus spare much fatigue and exposure, besides impressing the natives with a much greater sense of our importance.

It happened that one of the greatest native allies of the company, a man named E. Kuri, lived upon and owned the chiefdomship of a large portion of the river and the bordering country. So, taking a present to this gentleman, as a means of propitiation, we set sail

amidst the cheers and good wishes of our friends.

The voyage under ordinary circumstances ought not to have lasted many days; but as ill luck would have it, the winds proved capricious, and after knocking the little craft about in the most unmerciful way, at last obliged us to run for Kapita, whence we landed and found refuge from the storm that was brewing.

The whalers were a rough set of fellows; but the presence of the ladies acted like magic, and not a rude speech, or, except by pure accident, an oath slipped out, was uttered that could offend the most scrupulous of her sex.

Mr. Hadfield seemed to have gained a strong influence over them, and missionary though he was, he had won both their admiration and respect. There had been a good deal of trading going on since the practicability

of carrying goods across the country had been discovered; the men and women were better dressed, and their meals helped by a few simple luxuries hitherto unknown. The general appearance too of the place had altered considerably, and a few better built, and four-roomed cottages were already blooming with flowers. The whaling season was coming on; so the men were all in a bustle caulking their boats, splicing and making lines, sharpening harpoons, &c.

Finding Dick Hyde anxious to see something of the sport, and nothing loth myself to try an experiment to kill time, we agreed to return in time to get afloat with one of the principal boats.

After a sojourn of two days at Kapita we embarked again, all the merrier for our first experience in the roughing line, and the ladies especially proud of the way in which they had managed.

We had a difficult passage, the wind being against us, but we were all good sailors, and made light of the delay—a delay all the better for me, as it gave me a little longer to recover my strength before the ascent of the river.

Lucy Sinclair had a splendid voice and an inexhaustible supply of good temper and lungs. The colonel had brought a chess-board and pack of cards, and Miss Sinclair had a small private library, principally poetry, so the time slipped pleasantly and quickly by, Dick coming out in quite a new character, and reading poetry to the girls whenever they would listen to him.

The gale obliged us to keep a long way off shore, so except a fleeting glance of some prominent headland or mountain, we saw nothing of the coast, much to Lucy Sinclair's disappointment, she having made up her mind to fill her sketch-book before returning

to Wellington; and as she excelled in water-colour drawing, her wishes upon this point had a strong interest for us all.

At last we calculated we must be off the mouth of the Wanganui, so ran in towards shore; and after beating about an hour or so, found we were all right; we then waited until sunset for high tide, when we crossed the bar, and anchored inside, just as the last tinge of light was tipping the distant hills.

No sooner were we inside the bar than a couple of canoes, which had evidently been waiting our anchoring, darted out from behind the rock, which hid a pretty little bay just below the pah I had visited before. In the first I recognized my old friend E. Kuri. He was dressed in white duck trowsers and a striped Jersey shirt, and had already picked up the manners of civilization. So the Colonel asked him to dine with us, a performance

he got through with great credit to himself, and much to our amusement.

The idea of two English ladies going all the way to Taupo created great surprise at the pah, the native women coming in crowds to see them, and comparing them in the most amusing manner to the few specimens of white females they had seen, as, excepting the wife of the missionary, no lady had ever visited the Wanganui.

E. Kuri gallantly placed a hut at the Colonel's disposal, fortunately newly built, and consequently clean. Here the Sinclairs took up their quarters for the night. Next morning we embarked in E. Kuri's war canoe, and paddled up the river, the little vessel following. It was a lovely day, a cloudless blue sky, with a gentle breeze just curling the surface of the still water, and bringing up visions of fly-fishing; in fact, awaking such a store of old-world recollections in the Colonel's

mind, that he amused us for the whole day by reminiscences of his youth, and the merry days passed among the Scotch hills and salmon rivers.

We touched at a pretty settlement belonging to a staunch old Scotchman, who, with three or four sons, was steadily cultivating acre by acre, and building up a house for a future generation. The very name of Sinclair brought a glow to the old fellow's brown face, and when the Colonel claimed him as a countryman, the tears trickled down his cheeks.

"The Lord is gude, sir, to bring ye here to lighten my eyes. I never thocht to see ane o' yer name again. An thae bonnie lassies, are they yer dochters? Aye, weel, leddies, how d'ye tak' on wi' New Zealand? It's an unco rough life after the luxuries of bonnie Scotland. But then consider, we hae the same sort o' hills and rivers, the blue sky

and fair weather, wi' a fine productive soil to back it awe, and nae rents or taxes to pay. Think o' that, leddies, and bless the Lord that ye ha' come to the land."

"Indeed we do, Mr. Scott," said Lucy; "we were never half so happy even in Scotland as we are here, and as for luxuries, we have far more here than ever we had at home."

"That's richt. If I had a dochter like yersel' I'd just be content. But the Lord's will be done."

Mr. Scott would not hear of our leaving his house that day; but with the help of a couple of native women his sons gave us a capital dinner, eels being the fish most in favour.

After our banquet the young men proposed a pig hunt, with the view of giving the Colonel a fresh porker to replenish the ship's larder. Pig-hunting is a great

amusement in these out-of-the-way stations. The pigs are generally bought in large herds from the natives, and turned loose upon the plains to feed upon the roots of a sort of bulrush, and the fern. They soon become very wild, and often fierce, and it takes a good dog to secure one of them. We had capital sport; and one old boar who had been on the plain and his own master for three years, gave us a first-rate run of half-an-hour, and then turning to bay had a stand-up fight with the dogs, two of which he finished off on the spot, wounding half-a-dozen more, then suddenly turning tail again plunged into the thicket of flax, and in spite of our utmost exertions escaped. The Scotts laughed at our surprise, telling us it was an old dodge of the boar, and that he had served them so many a time, when any other pig must inevitably have fallen a victim.

Few birds as there are in the country, there are scarcely any in these parts. But old Scott talked very big of his intention to have some "muir-fowl" brought over; and a hot discussion ensued between the Colonel and him, as to the probability of their thriving, the Colonel giving his opinion against it. Tired of the argument, and seeing both old gentlemen settled down for innumerable tumblers of toddy, Scott having brought out a cask of real Glenlivet, I followed Dick Hyde's example, and took to the open air.

What a night it was! People will hardly believe one when they are told of a deep blue sky. Seeing and believing go together, and I both saw and believed. It was a deep transparent blue, sprinkled with such stars as one never sees in England, thousands of new and dazzling constellations, reminding you more strongly than anything else

I know of, that you have sailed round the globe, and are looking upwards from a different arena.

The moon was just skirting the distant mountains, shewing the peak of the mighty Ruapahu, and once or twice making just visible the crest of Tongariro. An intense stillness had settled down on the earth, and those on it seemed to sleep. Presently a clear ringing laugh drew my attention to the river, along which the moonlight quivered and glanced. Following the source of the voice, I found Dick and the two Sinclairs seated upon a bank overhanging the stream. When I joined them they were talking of old England and friends left there, and comparing notes for the last few years. Lucy laughingly appealed to me to find out whether I had any old world regrets still lingering. I saw Dick's bright eyes fixed upon mine,

and answered gravely and earnestly, "No, not one. I have left no friends behind me. My mother and one other are the only true friends I remember, and they are both dead. England is now no more than a dream, a memory, like some never to be forgotten picture, marred by time.

"You will not leave the colony then," said Miss Sinclair, "and return to England."

"I shall never see the old country again. I've chosen my home, and mean to keep to it."

"I'm glad to hear you say so," said Miss Sinclair. "I like people to think the present worth having. Let the dead past bury its dead," she added in a graver voice. "Ours is a living, working present, and what can be more glorious than to be one of a chosen band, who are destined by an omnipotent Power to prepare a fair and Eden-like

garden for His approach. I often think of this, Mr. Tobin, and I am sure you do.—But we are growing very serious, and I meant to ask you the first opportunity what you walk about at such strange hours for?"

"What do you mean, Miss Sinclair?" I asked, wondering whether she was in earnest or no.

"How innocent you pretend to be, when I saw you only the night before we sailed, pacing about in your little garden, long after midnight."

"You are mistaken," I said; "I was not out of the house; and Dick can support me, for he sent me to bed somewhere about nine o'clock; never resting until he had me safe there. Was the apparition very like me?"

"Oh! Kate, do not talk so," exclaimed Lucy, whose face, I could see even in the

dim starlight, had grown white and frightened; "we shall believe you've seen his wraith; and you know what that would end in."

I looked at Lucy. A strange thrill came across me, a sudden thought, why did she grow pale? Why should she care whether I lived or died? Could Lucy love me? I might then with some reason call New Zealand a land of promise. Why should I not forget, or at least crush out the memory of Miny; if I could win such a wife as the girl sitting beside me, there would be little to fear for the future. Thinking all this in my heart, I somewhat bitterly said,

"My wraith! That means death, does it not? Perhaps it is right; there is not much worth living for; and not one who would not forget me in a month."

"Do not be too sure of that, Mr.

Tobin," put in Miss Sinclair. "You may have staunch friends if you like to seek them; but unless sociable to your neighbours, you will scarcely find out your true friends. But the figure was certainly either yours or papa's, you are the same height, and in the dim light I might be mistaken."

Then she fell into deep thought, and a sadness fell upon the girls, who soon after rose and went into the house.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW THE LADIES GOT TO LAKE TAUPO.

On reaching the extremity of our water journey, we prepared to undertake the land portion; no easy matter if you take into consideration that we had in our company two young ladies who, though they had made up their minds to rough it with the best of us, little knew the real difficulty, and to what such a resolution led. Still they persevered in spite of the advice I could not refrain from giving, that they

had much better go back to Mr. Scott's station, and await our return. This, however, they indignantly refused, telling me I knew nothing of what Scotch women were capable.

In answer I pleaded my own former experience of the same journey.

"But you had not a woman with you," exclaimed Lucy, innocently, bringing a conscious flush to my face, which fortunately escaped her notice, "and how do the native women travel if not on foot? and are they any better than we are?"

"They are accustomed to it," I pleaded.

"You are really too bad, Mr. Tobin, trying so hard to dishearten us. I assure you we thought well over the difficulties of the undertaking before we proposed it to papa; and even came provided with a proper walking dress, something 'a-la-Turk,' which I am sure you will not be

so ungallant as to consider anything but most becoming."

"Everything Miss Sinclair wears, does or says, is so in the eyes of her humble servant," I replied laughing, making a low bow, to which she answered with an equally low, and much more graceful curtsey. Then turning her head with a saucy laugh, she said,

"Possibly Mr. Tobin has other reasons for wishing you and me to remain behind, Lucy. Are there any white people located near the lake, papa?"

"Never was there to see; ask Tobin," said the Colonel, looking up from the chess-board, over which he and Hyde were poring.

"You see, sir, I must rely upon you; can you answer me my question?"

And she fixed her bright eyes upon me with a keen, inquiring gaze. Like a fool, I began to blush and hesitate, so I received an

unmerciful teazing from the sisters, who both declared nothing on earth could prevent their going now just to see why I had not wished it."

On the morning of our journey they appeared in what they called their pedestrian suit, and which consisted in very much the same sort of dress as in these latter days has been stigmatised as "Bloomer," and unanimously condemned as fast, unfeminine, and Yankee-ish. Those who so readily pronounce their verdict against it, can have little idea of its real beauty combined with freedom of movement and comfort. Each limb has perfect freedom, and while a protection to every portion of the body, the dress fits too closely to leave anything to catch upon a bush or branch, and combines lightness with warmth. With a coquettish taste for effect, the sisters had chosen the prettiest colours and materials;

and bonnets being clearly quite outrè with such a costume, they had brought Glengarry caps.

E. Kuri's face of surprise, admiration, and delight when the sisters appeared, is beyond description. He grinned, bowed, walked round and round them ejaculating "good," until Miss Sinclair took her seat at the breakfast table, and Lucy found a refuge beside her father, who having acted in the capacity of adviser and part inventor, entered into the joke with great gusto, quizzing Dick and myself most unmercifully about our habiliments, and telling us, "his girls made better boys than we did."

"By Jove, you're right," muttered Dick, with his eyes fixed upon Miss Sinclair, "I never thought it possible a woman would dress that way. What would my mother say if——?"

"Never mind, my boy," said the Colonel. Remember this is the last time we shall sit at table for a month; make the most of it. Get your long legs under it, and eat your breakfast. Tobin looks as if he'd breakfasted."

A general laugh at my expense followed, and to all appearance the party were soon too much engrossed to pay attention to the habiliments of our fair companions.

The first day's journey had been purposely made the shortest, and being along a sort of pathway, and over a level plain, presented few difficulties. So when we pitched the little tent (brought expressly for the use of the ladies,) beside a limpid stream, we all voted the pleasures of travelling far outdid its hardships, and I was again reminded that in trying to prevent their accompanying us I had exposed myself to a delicate suspicion. Next day,

however, presented difficulties enough in some measure to give a different direction and more useful object to my endeavours, and the third fully cleared me, and convinced even Lucy that they *had* undertaken an unusual and trying expedition. Still, neither showed any intention to give in, save that occasionally I remarked a sort of shudder when we talked of our journey back over the same rough ground.

At last, on the sixth day at noon, we sighted the goal of our journey, and glowing beneath the full refulgence of a New Zealand summer sun, lay the lovely lake of Taupo, spread out like a map before us, not a breath of wind being astir to ruffle its noon-tide siesta, or mar the intense tranquillity of the water.

Coming suddenly upon us after gaining the summit of a small hill certainly nothing on earth could thus be so matchlessly lovely,

and tears glittered in the eyes of the sisters as they stood gazing with full hearts, paying silent, but all the more expressive homage. Even the Colonel forgot to compare it with any of his often-lauded Scotch lochs, and was almost as much overpowered as his daughters. Dick, (who could never hold his tongue for five consecutive minutes) broke the impressive silence, and though probably admiring the lake just as much as any of us, his admiration took another turn, and relieved itself in words.

Once broken, the silence was not allowed to begin again, and a thousand exclamations of delight, wonder, &c., followed one upon another; an hour passed, yet no one thought of, or, at least, proposed starting; and I soon suspected that the ladies had determined to bivouac there for the night, so that they might see all the effects of daylight, sun-

set, twilight, and moonlight, upon what they now warmly declared far exceeded in beauty anything they had imagined. Lucy I saw nervously clutching her sketch-book, as if uncertain whether she should dare attempt such a scene; but at last, finding we were all perfectly willing to rest where we were, fires were lighted, and preparation began for the necessary refreshment of the inner man; a meal consisting of pork chops, roasted wild pigeons and parrots, potatoes, bread, made no bad banquet; wine and beer, from their bulk and difficulty of carriage, we had been forced to forego, thereby causing great lamentation on Dick's part, who insisted upon bitter beer being the nectar sacred to the gods in olden times, and indispensable in these modern ones. However, after the first hour's indignation was over, he took kindly enough to old Scott's Glenlivat, and found just a taste of it, mixed

in the cool sparkling water, no bad substitute for his favourite beer. Lucy scarcely spoke during the afternoon, but sat wrapt up in her work of transferring the scene before her to the pages of her sketch-book, and not content with one view, must needs wait for sunset to take a second, regretting bitterly she could not attempt the moonlight view, which surpassed even sunset; and I verily believe the girls would have sat gazing at it the whole night had not a drizzling rain come on about twelve o'clock, which, passing like a mist across the picture, blurred out its beauties, and assisted us in persuading them that the shelter of their tent would be no despicable thing.

Dick and I sat down by the camp fire to smoke a pipe, and talk over the events of the day. The Colonel, who had been dozing for the last hour, muttered his thanks

to Heaven that those romantic children had at last acted like sane beings. E. Kuri was long ago wrapped in his blanket, and playing a nasal duet with one of his followers; the others being all stretched out, feet towards the fire, and in happy forgetfulness of the ills of life. So Dick and I, seated upon a couple of big stones, could indulge in as much talk, and in as many pipes as we pleased.

I have in a former chapter attempted to describe Taupo, and its wonderful hot springs, so shall say nothing now. When we were ready for a start next morning we signaled in the usual way, by firing; the report hardly echoed on the lake before several answering shots were heard, and presently three canoes were to be seen vying with each other as to their speed, and shouting their rowing songs with intense excitement as they flew over the still water,

every nerve straining in the race. It was a pretty sight, and one seldom to be forgotten.

My old acquaintance, Te Heu Heu, was in the winning boat, and sprang first to shore. He had not changed in the least since I saw him, and I suppose I had not, for at the first glance he knew me, and after shouting out the information to his followers, rushed up, and began performing the welcoming ceremony, pressing noses, and calling me his son and friend in the most affectionate manner. Having welcomed me, he performed the same ceremony with E. Kuri, who, though I believe none the best friends in the world, were not open enemies.

Of course, with true native politeness and hospitality, everything Heu Heu had was ours; and he insisted upon the sisters and Colonel at once taking places

in his canoe, and proceeding under his escort to the pah, leaving the rest of us to come with the other canoes. It was very amusing to see the uneducated Maori, or what the world would call "savage," doing the polite to a couple of English ladies, every feature of his face openly expressing his admiration, his only regret seeming that they could not converse with him as they did with E. Kuri; and once or twice I saw him look with a very ugly expression at his older companion.

On reaching the pah we were met by the whole of the tribe, who pressed round, kissing, weeping, and welcoming me. I ran my eye over the throng of faces, and I do not exactly know whether I should say I was disappointed or relieved not to meet with that of Pakan.

At the moment I think I was glad, then came a sort of fear; and when I thought

of it a few minutes after the bustle of our arrival, I would have given anything in the world to be sure she was well and happy.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PIBROCH ON LAKE TAUPO.

On reaching the village Te Heu Heu conducted us in the first place to his own palace, a long, narrow building, divided into eight or nine compartments, each being appropriated to a separate wife. Here he begged us to rest while he went to prepare a proper habitation for the Colonel and his daughters, hinting that Dick and I might find our own bed and board. Me he evidently looked upon favourably, in spite of sundry misgivings I had felt when I thought of the

manner I had taken my leave upon the occasion of my former visit, giving me charge of everything in connection with accommodation, shewing me a large empty house which he would give for their use, and calling a dozen natives up, ordered them to follow my biddings as to furnishing it, offering to send mats and blankets from his own store.

A wide and perfectly empty shed is rather a comfortless-looking dwelling at first sight, and still more hopeless to furnish, when you remember that you are hundreds of miles from the shadow of a chair or table. All this, of course, I was prepared for, and after making the natives give the inside a thorough cleaning, fleas being usually plentiful in deserted houses, I set them to work to gather fern and soft grass, cut one or two logs for seats, and patch up an impromptu table with branches and flax, after a most rural fashion.

Some of the native ladies stood looking on, grinning and quizzing me in their own way, and having no end of fun at my expense. Dick, whom I had enlisted in my service, worked enthusiastically, and when the blankets and mats arrived, and were laid upon the fern and grass couches, and a wood fire was lighted in one corner, we pronounced it a palace fit for a (sylvan) queen, and proceeded to escort our fair friends to their habitation. The girls were delighted, and amply repaid our trouble by their praise and thanks.

By my request Te Heu Heu tabooed their house, and for a couple of yards all round, so they were left to rest in comparative peace, no unnecessary luxury or indulgence, I assure the reader; a walk after grouse on the Scotch hills, and among the heather of a mountain-side, being child's play compared to wading, pushing, and scrambling into, through, and

over the obstacles that lie in the untrodden wilds of New Zealand, where one hour you are in a tangled and close dark forest, now up to your ancles in boggy stuff, the rotten leaves and twigs of years, panting and perspiring in the stifling atmosphere, tainted as it is by a thousand exhalations, and seldom purified by a breath of fresh air; now in a flax swamp, now standing helpless beside a deep, strong stream, knowing it must be crossed, but marvelling much *how;* then the mountain side, the sharp rocks, the blinding sun, only compensated for by the delicious breeze that clears away the mists from before you, and stirs up the life-springs of your heart with an effect so exhilarating that I have heard it not inaptly compared to the effect of a glass of champagne. Well, after four or five days spent in this sort of way, the shelter of a roof and the privacy of four walls can be better imagined than described; and I am

sure if either Kate or Lucy Sinclair had ever written a history of their lives for the benefit of the public, the first night in Te Heu Heu's village hut would have been marked as a special and remarkable event worthy of commemoration for life.

A great bustle was going on among the cooks of the pah, preparing the evening meal, at which, however, neither of the girls could be persuaded to present themselves, sleep and rest being all they required. I think the great chief was rather relieved than otherwise, having made up his mind to astonish them by a regal feast, preparations for which were already in progress; native ovens in every stage of operation, and the melancholy death-wail of porkers and fowl ringing sadly on the evening air, while the everlasting pound, pound, rub, rub, of the native pestle and mortar told of the coming cakes.

After partaking of Te Heu Heu's hospitality, I sallied forth to have a look for old friends, and endeavour to gain some tidings of Pakan. I soon fell in with several of those I had associated with, and received the same warm welcome from all. From the first of these I heard that Pakan was dead; she had been struck by a falling tree, and died soon after from the injuries inflicted.

Poor Pakan! her fate was a very terrible one, and threw a sadness over the place, which even the pretty faces, jokes, and merriment of my companions could not banish. I took Dick up to the spot where my hut had stood—I had told him the story of my sojourn long before—not a stick remained, and I was glad of it, only wishing I could as effectually obliterate the whole from my memory.

With a vague idea I might hear some tidings of Black, I began questioning the

most likely of my friends, and had nearly given it up in despair, when I heard that a man answering my description of Black was living up in the Waikato country, and passing himself off as a great priest and doctor. There was a woman with him, but they assured me she was a native, though from a distant part of the island, and not belonging to any tribe they knew of.

Black was evidently up to his old trade, acquiring influence and money, as by the native's account he could cure every disease under heaven, and had already possessed himself with a large tract of country he had received and stocked from the fruit and profits of his marvellous cures, every day making the people look upon him with the greater wonder, and hold him up as nothing short of a god. He was trading, too, and purchasing guns, gunpowder, &c., from any ship that had them for sale. These he retailed at

an enormous price to the natives, binding eachpurchaser over to make use of the gun any day he the great doctor chose to command.

Every native is perfectly ready to work and wait for years for the possession of a rifle or gun, which in their idea is the first and highest desideratum in life; and though fearfully ignorant as to their real worth, they look upon them in a fighting light, and count their enemies so many dozen less for every gun they purchase. Powder is a secondary thing, the gun being *the* weapon, and the very sight of its long, straight barrel enough to strike terror and consternation.*

Having learned all they had to tell, I sought rest for my limbs at least, though there was little chance of sleep, my mind, which was hard at work, pondering over the

* The Maories are now, in 1864, first rate marksmen, as the latest reports too sadly testify.

news of Black, whom I was determined to find out more of if I could, and to visit the Waikato the first opportunity, and beard the lion in his den, forgetting that I was powerless among his numerous partizans. When I did sleep horrible dreams haunted me, and I was glad to leave the hot, suffocating hut, and get out into the pure, clear air. There a holier influence stole across me—my passion subsided. How could earthly excitement and earthly anger prevail before the calm and holy influence that was before and around me. Still warm and filled with an indefinable fragrance, the air seemed almost like the breath of an unseen but present being. The moonbeams lay like a silver pall over the wide lake. Towards the south the crests of Tongariro and Raupahu cut a clear, hard outline along the horizon, while on the east and north a confused mass of hills, one over the other, came out in fan-

tastic forms of light and shade, the whole changing like a fairy scene as the moon gradually stole along her course.

Forgetful of all but the wondrous beauty around me, I sat until the grey beams of another day began paling the glorious light around me, and more than half the lake was wrapt in an intensely black shade, and then not caring to lose the holy influence of the few hours I had passed in the presence of night, I went back to the hut where Dick lay fast asleep and totally oblivious as to either the beauty of the night or the nocturnal depredations of certain small and lively black visitors. How little did the coming future foreshadow itself that night with its quiet stars and clear moon, destined to usher in a day which influenced my whole future life.

Early in the forenoon the sisters proposed taking Te Heu Heu's offer of his canoe,

and, by proceeding along the eastern shore of the lake, visit several of the most famous hot springs. Te Heu Heu insisted upon accompanying us, hinting that the lake was subject to sudden storms, and though Maories could swim, perhaps the Pakehas could not, he picked a choice crew, and provided the boat with a stock of sweet potatoes and fish, in case we were obliged to camp out in consequence of rough weather. I thought the chief was taking unusual precautions for such a trifling event as a voyage up the shores of a lake, especially with a cloudless sky above, and scarcely a breath of wind agitating the warm air; but I was too busily engaged with the innumerable little messages and requests of the sisters, to pay more than passing attention until we were fairly launched, and then remembering the hint as to the probability of a sudden storm,

I looked somewhat anxiously up the lake, but the water lay as smooth as the surface of a looking-glass, and reflected the surrounding hills with almost as great accuracy.

On we darted, the natives making the canoe fly over the still water to the regular and musical chaunt of their boat-song. The girls were in extacies, and catching the air of the native boat-song, mightily delighted the natives by joining with their own sweet voices, finally taking up the burthen entirely, and giving time by the beautiful, and at that period new song of the Canadian boatman, the echoes repeating the long falling notes innumerable times.

"Now girls," said the Colonel, "sing me 'Mac Gregor's gathering;' there's no fear of the consequences on such a day as this."

Kate Sinclair laughed gaily, but deadly pallor crossed Lucy's bright face, and I saw her clench her hand suddenly, as if in pain.

"Not to-day, papa dear," she said, quickly. "Oh! Kate, do not sing that dreadful song."

But Kate had already begun and her full deep voice rang out over the still waters with a force and brilliancy I shall never forget. Lucy even seemed surprised, and unable to resist the fascination, joined. When the song was over, Colonel Sinclair, who had listened with a kindling eye, and rising colour, said,

"Again, Kate, once again; I seem back in bonnie Scotland, among my own heathery braes. Again. I could almost fancy, I hear the pibroch coming down that glen."

As he spoke, I glanced in the direction

in which he pointed. The glen was a deep volcanic cleft in the mountain side, and verily, down it came the hum as of distant pipes. A hasty exclamation from Te Heu Heu, a loud whistle, a splash of wind and foam in my face, and the next moment I was buffeting with a perfect whirlpool of water, caught up seething and boiling by the tornado.

There was one fearful cry; I knew it was Lucy's voice, and the words were: "Father! Kate! save me." Then a heavy weight dashed against me, and I remember no more until I found myself lying upon the green bank, and one of the native boatmen gently rubbing my chest.

For a few minutes a dull overwhelming consciousness of some terrible calamity having happened, was all that presented itself to my mind. Gradually as the

oppression passed away, and my brain became clear, the whole dreadful truth flashed upon me, and starting up, I looked fearfully round.

The first person I saw was Dick, lying close beside me, apparently dead, then Lucy, thank God, alive, but with pale face and streaming hair she was hanging over the margin of the lake, (now again as calm as the moment we embarked upon it). One of her hands was grasped by the chief, who was evidently endeavouring to hold her back; for I saw her struggle and turn her white face towards him with such a wild expression of despair and reproach, that I sprang up with the conviction that he must let her go. I was at her side in an instant, and threw my arms round her as I cried,

"Lucy, Lucy, what has happened? Speak to me, where are they?"

She turned, her eyes dilated, a cry broke from her lips, and then with a hysterical laugh, she clasped her arms round my neck, and began to sob, clinging to me, and moaning like a child. While trying to sooth her, I saw that two or three of the natives were endeavouring to recover the bodies of her father and sister by diving, and forgot poor Dick Hyde in my anxiety until a moan at my elbow roused me, and looking up, I saw him sitting beside me, crying.

"Oh! Martin," he whispered, "if I could have saved her! I tried, but we both went down."

I knew he was speaking of Kate.

"How was it, Dick?" I asked, and Lucy looked up.

She did not see Dick however, and laid down her head again, as if unable

to bear the light; and Dick with more thought than I had, whispered, "do not speak now, poor thing! her mind's wandering; and no wonder, God help her."

CHAPTER XIV.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

If I dwell long upon the terrible scene of death and distress which I have just described, I fear my reader will begin to imagine I have nothing but griefs and troubles wherewith to torment him. That I had my share, God knows; but thank God too, they came early in life; and as a cloudy morning often heralds a bright and cloudless day and evening, so it was with me. I learnt to realize what disappointment was, and to place a truer value upon life and

the world than I should under more favourable circumstances have done, and I think also to value its happiness at a much truer price, gradually, but surely laying my hopes on a firmer trust, growing a happier man as I became a better Christian.

Properly looked upon, early trials, losses and disappointments act as inducements to a better life, opening out, reforming and establishing the natural character, rousing a spirit that under more prosperous circumstances might have lain dormant, or even worse, been entirely driven from the heart. Energies we knew not of, power of action, talents and self-dependence begin to assert their various claims, and many a man, aye, and woman too, looking back in their old age, upon the vista of a long hard-working and active life, can look up to heaven and say from the innermost

depths of the heart, "Thanks to Thee, my God, that I have seen trouble, for without trouble I should never have found the peace and hope that had made me what I am." The path was narrow, the gate strait, but better and ten thousand fold more precious to me than the broad and easy road.

Poor Lucy! hers was a bitter awaking. She had never known a greater grief than leaving the old home in Scotland, and then was sustained by a father's and sister's affection, and all the sunny hopes and bright dreams of a new country. These now were, to all appearance blighted for ever; father and sister snatched from her in one brief moment, and without a relation or old friend to fly to, she was left, in this far off land. For hours she wept in despair, then sunk into a sort of torpor worse than the violence of grief; for I

knew not what course to take, or how to rouse her. The only thing seemed to be to hurry back to Wellington, or at least to the nearest missionary station, and give her up to a woman's ministering care; for what could either Dick or I know of comfort, not to speak of the difficulty of the situation in every way.

The nearest missionary station was one upon the Wanganui, and thither with all haste we went, the natives carrying Lucy in a sort of hammock, and travelling at much greater speed than I could have believed possible. But savages though they were deemed, I never saw more genuine sympathy, or gentler care than they shewed towards the poor stricken girl. In an incredibly short time we reached the Wanganui; and very soon after the missionary station. The clergyman was absent attending a native meeting, somewhere in

the Waikato country, and might not be back for weeks, but his wife received Lucy with the tenderness and pity of a mother; and thankful to feel she was at last in safe keeping, I determined to go to Wellington, and give up the poor Colonel's yacht into proper hands.

The night before starting Lucy came to me and asked me what I was going to do. I told her, and explained that I thought she should remain where she was for a short time, and that I would return, and when she was able take her down to Wellington. She only sighed, took hold of my hands, and looking in my face, with a long and wistful look, said,—

"Papa loved you—you will not desert me?"

"God forbid," I replied, "I will come again."

"Have you no sister in England?" she said.

"No, Lucy, not a soul that remembers or cares for me. No one ever did, but my mother; and you know she died before I came out."

"Poor fellow," she sighed, "I will stay here, if you think I ought; but all is so dark and desperate. I never thought of death, and now I have nothing to comfort me."

"Mrs. Gray will teach you comfort, Lucy. Go to her, she is waiting now; she will tell you what my mother told me, that everything that is God's doing must be for our future good. God bless you, Lucy, yours is a terrible loss; but you will talk differently to me when I come back, and you must try and bear up. You know that they are better off where they are."

She bent her head, burst into tears, and left the room, and I saw her no more then, for we left at daybreak. Yet that night Mrs. Gray came to me and told me Lucy had asked her

to explain what I meant, and how the death of her father and sister could ever be a blessing.

" You have awakened her heart, Mr. Tobin," said Mrs. Gray, in a kind tone, " take care, if you ever have it in your power, to keep alive the hope your few words have kindled. If she remains here till my husband's return he will help me to teach her where to look for comfort; but it will be a consolation to you to feel that it is to you we shall owe the first step. May God in his infinite mercy give you the peace and comfort I hope you will find she has gained. Leave her to me as long as you can, and depend upon me as upon a mother."

So Dick and I took ship and departed, sick and sad at heart heaven knows. Fair winds carried us on our way. Te Heu Heu left us after piloting us across the bar at the mouth of the river, taking with him a note

from me to the company's agent, detailing the melancholy news; and we were once more on the broad blue sea, but with what different feelings than when we saw the same sea before.

After an uncommonly quick passage we anchored in Nicholson Bay, and immediately proceeded to Colonel Wakefield's residence, to give him the particulars of the accident.

In a young colony, such as Wellington still was, the old adage, that "ill news travel apace," is amply verified; and before we had well concluded the story, the fact was all over the settlement.

The Colonel and his daughters had been among the first to arrive in the country, and were universal favourites, and many a tear greeted the sad news.

Having delivered over the ship, &c., I went to my own quarters with Dick, and there

found two letters, one from England, one from Auckland.

The first revived a painful and still too dearly prized past, and I had had enough of sadness for one day, so I laid it aside and opened the other, which as I had conjectured was from Trevor. He told me he had seen Mr. Bushby, and found no more letters had arrived for me; and further, that having told Captain Hobson of me, I should find a friend ready to help me if I chose to go to Auckland; but at the same time he strongly advised me to stay where I was, and stand by the Company, which, in his opinion, would some day come off triumphant in spite of all the evil and slanderous reports circulated. The most important part of the letter was, however, yet to come; and was this, that Black had been seen in the town again, and that, too, in company with Clari; that he was, however, upon some new tack, and according to Trevor's

idea, was making friends with the natives for some deep laid purpose known only to himself.

Moreover, he had become the agent for some of the missionaries in portions of the interior where no regular stations had been established. He had left Korrorariki the day after the arrival of the new governor, and disappeared no one could or at least would tell where.

The letter ended by giving me a little advice as to the sort of land to invest in, and wound up by asking if I had yet received any Slyndhurst news, adding, as he had done before, " I'll be with you some fine day."

Dick was devouring a tremendously long epistle when I looked up; and evidently hardly knowing whether to laugh or cry; at last the first gained the victory, and throwing the letter in the air he burst into the first laugh I had heard from his lips since the fatal day on the lake.

"You need n't stare old boy," he said at last, condescending to see my surprise. "By Jupiter, the old man's mad—regularly insane, and no mistake. Just read that bit—No! I'll read it to you—that's better—here goes."

"'Your uncle'—he's not my uncle, but we always called him uncle—' has been very ill, nearly dead, in fact, and frightened into making his will, which he gave me to keep for him.—In this will, my dear Dick, your name stands for twenty thousand pounds, to be given you as soon as you can show us the sum of five hundred pounds gained by your own endeavours in New Zealand.'

"There, Tobin, did you ever hear a greater humbug. Five hundred pounds by my own endeavours! By Jove, I must find a gold mine, or a coal pit, or something. I can never make five hundred pounds. It's quite madness of the old gentleman, to enforce

such a condition. I've as much chance of his money on his own terms as that bootjack has. I suppose he thinks the gold lies about here like sand at home; and yet he knows better, for he has been in the country himself, and that makes the absurdity greater. I say, Tobin, don't sit simpering there, like a boarding-school miss. Speak out, man. Give us the benefit of your wisdom and worldly knowledge. How am I, Richard Cavendish Hyde, to pocket five hundred pounds by industry? Behold my hands; regard the muscles of my arms; take into consideration the non-development of the bump of perseverance, and then answer me, how am I to realize five hundred pounds?"

"By setting to work," I replied, as a sort of feeler.

"Work! work!! say you. Of course I'll work. I came here to work. Let's see—I'll be your flunkey; how much will you give me?"

"Joking apart, Dick, you'll have to work."

"Joking apart, Tobin, I came to New Zealand to work; but what at? There's the rub."

"Well, if you'll listen for five minutes, I'll tell you. Here's a letter from a friend of mine up at Korrorariki. He tells me to go to Auckland, and he'll guarantee me the governor's favour. Suppose you go instead of me."

"Well! suppose I do, what then? Will the governor take me as chêf de cuisine?"

"If he's partial to broiled kidneys he will," I said, laughing. "But, seriously, I mean it. I'm not inclined to go; why shouldn't you? There's an opening. I'll lend you five hundred pounds to buy land, wherever Captain Hobson locates himself. You'll get the choice lots; my friend will see to that. You can keep your eyes open and sell when the rush to the capital begins,

and if you cannot double over and over again the purchase money, I'll say New Zealand's not worth living in."

Dick sat with his eyes wide open.

"You're not in earnest, Tobin. You wouldn't trust me with five pounds, let alone five hundred."

"We shall see. I'll take all you make over the five hundred you want. You'll soon pay me, old fellow."

"Lunatic number two!" observed Dick, *sotto voce*—then, aloud, "It's a bargain! but if I lose your money, what then?"

"I might do the same."

"No, no; you're a prudent fellow, I never was."

"You'll mend of that. Twenty thousand is worth running for. Come, clench the bargain. Pack your traps, and get on board the return boat. You'll be at Korrorariki before the ruck, and see what you can do.

Only don't tell every fellow you meet what you're bound for."

"But if I fail?"

"But you won't, Master Dick. Come, take my advice. I'll write a letter for you to take to Trevor, and in six months you'll be here again, *en route* for England, and with five hundred shiners in the bank."

"You're an uncommonly good fellow, Tobin," said Dick, growing suddenly grave, "but it won't do. Go yourself, and pick out the best land you can see. Trevor will help you to choose, and I'll come and see you are going on well.

"I can't do it, Tobin," he began again, after a long pause. "It's no use, I'm not steady enough. You see I never was. I can get on with you, but that's a different thing to going al on my own hook. It's no use, Tobin, I say; it can't be done. I should only lose your money, and then I should cut

my throat, or something of that kind; so let's drop the subject. It's uncommonly kind of you, though, and I won't forget it in a hurry."

"Come, come, Dick, 'faint heart,' you know. Where's the good of being down in the mouth? If we don't think well of ourselves no one else will. You've plenty of energy, and I don't care much whether you lose the money or not. I might do the same, as I said before. Take my advice, start by the steamer, see Trevor, and if he cannot persuade you to make a trial, why just come back again, and we'll go partnership on the Wanganui."

Dick shuddered, and grew pale.

"Don't talk of the river, for *God's sake!* I'll never go near it again. You little knew how I was learning to love poor Kate, and the jolly old Colonel too. But, Tobin, now we've broken the ice again, what are you going to do about Lucy?"

The question startled me.

"Do, my dear fellow—do? what can I do?"

"Marry her, of course. I don't see what else you can do. She has no one here to take care of her. But there! I've put my foot in it again; though, on my honour, I thought you were thinking of it long before."

I had been so occupied thinking of Miny, and imagining myself completely broken-hearted, that the possibility of loving any one else, or ever again trusting a woman's heart, seemed to reopen all the conquered, but unhappily not healed, wounds of the past.

Dick saw what his words had done, and wisely left me to myself to fight as best I could against the haunting ghost of former times, and once again cover up the wound. No such easy task, poor weak mortal that

I was. But then, remember that it was my first love; and that, too, not a boyish affection, half conceit at the notion of being in love, half the lingering, soft-hearted ways of childhood, which he fears a sister might laugh at, but the steady growth of years, and the one only inducement to action that had brightened my future.

CHAPTER XV.

A TERRIBLE REVENGE.

A FEW days after the conversation recorded in my last chapter, Dick Hyde announced his intention of proceeding immediately to the north, there to be guided by the advice of Trevor or circumstances, as the fit might take him; furthermore, that he would accept my loan, and take a solemn vow to return it with interest in two years. I laughed at his earnestness, and began to feel almost sorry I had used so many inducements to send him away from me. He was a capital

companion, light-hearted, true and kindly; and beneath all his seeming carelessness and perversity there ran a vein of strong, honourable feeling, of firm friendship and sincerity that amply redeemed any pretended frivolity; so that when I found he had determined to go, and reflected that it was entirely my own doing, I must say I felt I might have considered the old adage, "Charity begins at home," and kept Dick with me instead of sending him off to an unknown part, from a chivalric notion that he would make a fortune. But regrets were of no use. I had set the train in motion, and for very shame's sake dare not stop it. So Dick went to make new friends, beginning colonial life in earnest, and I was left, I may say, alone; for although by no means unsociable, I had never made much progress in any friendship save Dick's.

I have often remarked this sort of thing

in colonial society; every one knows, and is on easy terms *with each other;* there is no stiffness or sacrifice to *etiquette;* keeping up appearances is unknown, and if you are poor, so are hundreds of others; work is the order of the day; you came out to work, you stay there to work, and your only chance of seeing old England again is by working. You are thus all much on a level, and a man in a glass house cannot throw stones. Yet it is, I think, to this constant work we may lay the blame of want of companionship. People have no time to be friends, no time to examine into or give their thoughts to another. Their own business occupies them every moment, and when the day's labour of hands or head is over, nature requires rest and sleep, not communion with an equally harrassed mind. Certainly by these means the happy colonist in his first years escapes that scourge of

European and idle society, scandal — a blessing in its way truly enough; but even scandal is a mark of sociability, and shows, however much you dislike the manner of the evidence, that some possess an interest in you and your doings. There's no time for scandal or gossip in the early stages of a colonial existence, just as there is no time for confidential friendships. You all get on, and call each other Tom or Jack, lending help when you are not in want of it yourself; but there the line of demarcation begins. Your next neighbour might be a Prince or a murderer in disguise; you would never find it out, or if accident disclosed it the knowledge would never trouble your head. The ring of the axe upon the stem of the kauri, the few green-blades of your first crop, the click of the shearing scissors, have a much closer interest.

Some will say, "so much the better,"

but I don't; nor can any one who has lived alone in such a state of society. It is all very well for a family man, but simply horrible for a bachelor. You are verily an anchorite, and might sing with painful truth—

"I care nothing for nobody,
For nobody cares for me."

Heigho! Dick was gone, and comparatively an idle man. I was alone, a drone in the midst of a busy hive. My whole time seemed to be absorbed in looking out for the long expected news from England, when I fondly hoped my fate to be decided; then for some news from Trevor as to Black or Tom, and my letters; and lastly for the ending and adjustment of the much vexed and tedious land question, on the conclusion of which I might proceed to the Wanganui, and take possession of my claim.

Commissioner Spain was hard at work, but harrassed and opposed on every side. The very men who had called him in as umpire, and offered to leave the sole decision in his hands, were the first to run counter, raise objections, and question every step he took. Witnesses were brought forward or kept back as the emissaries of the Governor's party thought fit. The Company and Colonel Wakefield were treated as pirates or invaders, and snubbed if ever they came forward. Great and general was the indignation, and once or twice the smouldering fire would assuredly have burst forth, had it not been judiciously damped by the sensible advice of the Colonel himself, who showed the colonists clearly that they must not bring the Government down upon them by any rash acts, but rather by their patience and straightforward determination disarm the accusations so long laid to their

charge, and prove that they were carrying out their original policy, and the trust placed in them by the noble hearts who had first planned the formation of the Company.

The unfortunate emigrants who had departed for the Wanganui expecting to be put into immediate possession of the lands in which they had invested their money were collected a few miles up the river, in a temporary village, and passed their time in grumbling at the Government, or chafing and insulting the natives, thereby sowing the first seeds of a crop that will never die out so long as the Maoris exist as a separate people. Hunting pigs was the only sport, numbers of these animals having been turned out, on the swamps in years gone by had run wild, and increasing in a manner that spoke highly for the prolific influence of the climate and food, were now

the common game of the district; and lucky, too, for the settlers that it was so, as it is well known that there is no native game, and except a few parrots and ducks very few birds.

In spite of some drawbacks and the uncertainty of our land claims we led a very jovial life. A nephew of Colonel Wakefield's, Edward Jerningham Wakefield, took a great interest in the settlement, and somehow—I believe he scarcely knew himself—became a sort of general merchant, magistrate, chief of police, banker, advice-giver, and altogether the life and fun mover of the colony.

A few of the colonists had taken their wives with them, and thus there existed just sufficient female influence to keep the colonists from forgetting the usages of society.

When Dick Hyde was fairly off for the

north, I grew terribly moped and lonely, and as I said before, every one else was too busy to be company for an idle fellow like myself. So I saw nothing for it but to take a run up to Mr. Gray's mission upon the Wanganui.

I was still debating the matter when I received a letter from Lucy begging me to see some old servant of her father's, and forward a parcel by the bearer of the letter. So of course I decided to go myself. It took little time to make my preparations. A knapsack, powder-flask, and shot-belt, was all I required, and accompanied by the native messenger, I set off upon my walk. Otaki was my first station; and here falling in with some old acquaintances among the whalers I determined to stay a few days, nothing loath to kill time in any way that was going forward; there being a wedding and its consequent merry-makings on the

tapis, I sent the guide or letter-carrier forward, to give notice of my approach, and accepted the quarters offered me by a good-natured old native of the Emerald Isle, who having made his own country too hot to hold him, by reason of certain smuggling propensities, sought safety and riches in the unfettered west. Like most men of his stamp, Dennis was a reckless "devil-may-care" sort of fellow, with a joke and good word for those who kept in his good graces, but a curse and blow for his enemies. The fear of the latter was enhanced by his size and strength, for Dennis measured over six feet without his brogues, and could send a dinner knife through a two inch plank of roto wood with one stroke of his formidable arm. It was one of Dennis's daughters who was going to be married, a pretty half-breed girl, but the bridegroom elect was as ill-conditioned

and gin-sling-drinking a specimen of a Yankee as you would meet with in a day's walk.

There was a look in the girl's face when her intended spouse was by, that I could not at all reconcile with her intention of marrying him; and even had I not accepted her father's invitation to remain, I think I should have found an excuse to do so on some other plea in order that I might see the end of what I suspected would turn out a tragic drama worth witnessing.

During the next day I gathered that the girl Mary had been in love with a handsome young Maori chief; but having white blood in her veins, it was considered by her relatives a degradation on her part to marry him. Accordingly, her father first tried fair means to get quit of him; these failing, he took to bullying, and finally the

native disappeared, though how, or where to, no one knew, or perhaps cared even to inquire.

After he was out of the way, Mary for a time grew morose and ill-tempered, shutting herself out of sight, and refusing to speak to her father. Suddenly this changed; she became as blithe as ever, and some said she had forgotten her troubles, others again that she was "biding her time," and how much nearer the mark they were, the sequel will shew. At this epoch the Yankee skipper turned up, and taking the hint from her father, Mary set her cap so successfully, that in a month he had come to the point, and the wedding-day was fixed. Strange as it may seem, the new lover never heard a word of the former one, and boasted pretty openly of his luck, &c. The night before the wedding, was according to the whalers' custom, the occasion of great

mirth, drinking, and dancing, being the order of the night.

I had the honour of leading off the entertainment with the bride, who seemed nothing loath to let me keep her Yankee lover at a distance,—a piece of coquetry he did not like, but, until warmed by whiskey and the taunts of the company, did not venture to take any open notice of.

At last, as I was standing beside Mary in a sort of bay-window, he swaggered up.

"I say, gal, what d'ye mean by being so thick with that 'ar stranger. Ye shan't carry on that game after we're spliced, *so help me G—!*"

"Hold your tongue if you cannot speak civilly," retorted Mary, growing as white as a sheet. "You'd better be making your peace with the Almighty, than swearing by

him; it's not long till you'll be with Him."

The Yankee laughed, and put his arm round her.

"Back, you fool!" she said; her voice scarcely rising above a whisper, so intensely was her passion roused. "Back! or by Him whose name you took just now, I'll send you there before your time. Can't you wait till your call comes? You little think how soon it will."

I suppose the Yankee was too drunk to take heed, or see the deadly expression in the girl's face; but I saw both, and rather more; for I saw she had a short knife hid in her breast, and that the veins of her hand and arm rose and throbbed, as she clenched the hilt.

Lying my hand upon the man's shoulder, I turned him off. He stared, then throwing away his pipe, gave utterance to a volley

of abuse, shouting and dancing with passion. The crowd soon gathered round laughing and jeering the infuriated wretch, until, driven almost frantic, he made a dash at the first who stood in the way, and measured his length on the ground, by way of reprisal, having fallen foul of Dennis himself.

"What does the spalpeen want? "said Dennis, with a smile peculiar to himself. "He, may be, took me for you, Mary, an' was going to embrace me."

The laugh that followed this speech, brought the Yankee to his legs, and considerably sobered; for Dennis's fist was no light one. He sneaked off muttering curses, not loud, but deep. Mary did not shew any more that night or next day till noon, when the wedding or mock ceremony that passed as such, came off. Dancing followed until dark, when the

newly married couple were escorted to the hut prepared for their residence, and therein installed, amidst libations of rum and whiskey, an enormous keg of whale-oil being lighted in front of the door, while a barrel of rum was broached, and distributed then and there.

I am not usually very squeamish or inclined to be fanciful, but that night I could not shake off, what I suppose must be the feeling talked of as presentiment. Just as Mary was handed off by her newly-made husband she had put a small packet in my hand, bidding me keep it till to-morrow for her; and there was something in her look at the time, that kept curdling my blood, and rising like a shadow in spite of myself. Yet tired out and pretty well primed with a sleeping draught, in the shape of punch, made after Dennis's own plan, I was not long dis-

turbed by haunting ghosts or strange dreams, as I suppose six out of seven of my readers think I ought to have been, and did not wake until the sun was pretty well upon his day's march. Even then, however, I was to all appearance first in the field. There was not a sign of any one being astir, and sundry snores from the other divisions of the hut told their own tale.

I had always been in the habit of beginning the day with a bathe, and after taking my swim, was leisurely dressing, when a commotion in the village attracted my attention. Men, women, and children, were appearing like a swarm of bees, all hurrying in one direction. I of course soon joined, but no one could satisfy my curiosity; so there was nothing for it but to follow, and use my eyes. Presently we

reached the hut of the newly married couple. Then pressing forward, I made my way in. My presentiment of evil, if such it was, was terribly realized. There in the middle of the floor lay the naked body of the Yankee bridegroom, his face and chest literally riddled with wounds, while crouching in a corner, covered with blood, and gasping for breath, sat poor Mary. I entered at the same moment as her father. With a shriek she sprang to her feet, passed him like a bird, and making her way through the frightened crowd, no one opposing her, was down at the edge of the river, before they seemed to collect their senses.

It was too late, though I question whether an attempt to do more would have been made. Death was the most merciful end for the poor mad girl, and as it turned

out, death would have been inevitable; for after killing the Yankee, she had attempted to kill herself, and broken the knife into her breast, where it still was when they recovered her body.

In the packet she had given me was a piece of paper, round which she had wrapped a long tress of her hair, with the words—

"Give this to my father, and tell him I "wet it in the blood of him he murdered. "He can wet it in mine for he has killed me "too."

Poor Mary had found her Maori lover's body, with her father's knife still in it. The knife she had taken, and, after burying the body, had concealed until the hour of her revenge came on. Perhaps at first, she meant it for her father. Be that as it may, she was spared that crime, and perpetrated a much more dreadful revenge. For the

old man never held up his head again; but from that day sat a shivering idiot in the corner of his hut, babbling on about Mary and her wedding.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN EVENING IN THE CAMP.

THE reader may rest assured that after such a scene as that detailed in the preceding chapter, I was not averse to leave Otaki, and "make tracks," as the Americans call it, for the Wanganui, half hoping, by quick travelling, to overtake the messenger, and proceed with him. At the Manawatu river I found the old pah broken up, and had to content myself with a supper of fern roots roasted upon embers.

My next day's journey would bring me as far as the Rangitiki river, where I felt

pretty sure of falling in with friends, several of the early settlers had located themselves there, and the ordinary road to the Wanganui running through their village. It was a pretty long spell from my last bivouac, but I did not much relish repeating either my supper or the cold ground for a bed, so pushed on heedless—at least careless—of fatigue, and by dint of good training accomplished the distance just at nightfall.

I found the village all astir with the news that a couple of whales had been observed off the mouth of the river; every one owning an excuse for a boat, was getting ready for the chase, it being an established rule that each man taking part in the pursuit comes in for a share of the spoil. It was about a mile's run to the ocean, but that was considered nothing, and speedily the first flight of boats was cheered away; then followed the second, and lastly the third—these last

being small canoes and old, laid up, or useless boats which put off on their doubtful undertaking, amidst the jeers and laughter of the crowd. After the expedition set forth, some of those who remained behind found time to attend to me and my wants. It was quite dark, so I was glad to get under a friendly roof. A good night's rest and plentiful breakfast set me on my legs for my journey next day; and in spite of many remonstrances I set off, determined not to tarry again until I had accomplished the goal of my journey, and then to be guided by circumstances, a latent wish having been tormenting me for a long time to seek Trevor, and find out something more about my family story.

The Wanganui settlement I found in a sadly disheartened and grumbling state, every one threatening to throw up their nominal claims and leave, unless some definite agree-

ment was reached. Nor could it be wondered at, most of them being men of some little capital, who had embraced the projects held out by home agents, on the plea that a little money soon doubled itself, and that a month or two in the new colony would see them flourishing farmers, all this being put a climax to by the interference of the so-called government and appointments of the land-claims commissioner.

Grumbling was as much the order of the day here as at Wellington; no one was pleased, no one was content. Newspapers, when they reached the settlement, were eagerly and greedily devoured. Government was fiercely abused, unfortunately not without good cause; and the missionaries, as a class, blamed by all, and to their interference the whole obnoxious system was attributed. Edward Wakefield had just taken his departure for Wellington, bearing with him

such a burthen of complaints, that, had he attempted to repeat a tythe of them, must have ended his career. Fortunately he knew better, and wisely heard everything, said all he could to comfort and encourage the railers, and then throwing care to the dogs, started on his way.

I mean no disrespect to Mr. Wakefield; it is only what I should have done in his case, and being in exactly the same predicament as the rest of the Wanganui settlers himself, he naturally would forward their interests when occasion served. More than this none could do; and since the appointment of the governor any one bearing the name of Wakefield was a marked man, and open to the insults of the government party, and yet the government party did not openly attempt to unseat or send Colonel Wakefield home, but they gave him a bad name, and thereby in the end accomplished their purpose.

I had some intention of staying a few days at the village, but every one was discontented, and I was so tormented with questions, that I found it not only impolitic, but utterly impossible to answer, that I took the only clear course open, and having engaged a boat, departed on my way up the river, but as soon as I left the settlement my lazy fit returned, and I determined to rest on my oars, exploring as I went.

The reader will believe from this that I was no impetuous lover hurrying madly to the feet of his mistress. Truly, I had no definite idea what I was going to do; for although I had cast aside all hope as far as Miny was concerned, I imagined my heart to be as truly hers as ever; and as for making Lucy my wife, if the notion—as I confess it really had once or twice—ever entered my imagination, it was but to be cast aside as folly or madness. Verily Dick Hyde had much to ac-

count for: saving for his words, I do not suppose I should have dreamt of such a consummation to the tragedy of the lake, but since he had put the possibility of it before me, it would return at all sorts of unreasonable times, starting up in the dead of night, rising in the lonely walks by day, tempting me to dwell upon the possibilities of a happy after life, and once or twice actually making my blood tingle as I thought of some young mother, in a prosperous, cheerful home, surrounded by her healthy, loving, bright-eyed babies.

It is all very well of bachelors boasting so loudly of their freedom, and taunting their Benedictine friends with their home-shackles. Depend upon it, it is the old story of sour grapes, and could the happy father and husband see behind the veil, he would find out how thin-skinned his joking and boasting friend was. I think nature

encourages mortal love as much, or almost as much, as it certainly does the adoration of the immortal. "Man was not made to live alone," nor was he made any more surely to admire alone. Who ever looked upon a beautiful view or scene without wishing some one—*the one*—was there to share its beauty. And if, as is too often the case in this life, such a happiness may never be, the heart goes on alone, waiting with the vague yearning for the eternal love.

Sometimes it is said friendship can fill the gap; perhaps it was something of this that was appealing my heart, but true it was that Lucy's image became blended with the loveliness around me, and yet Miny's was never altogether absent, it shone over all like a distant star, beloved beyond all, hallowing and purifying all, but removed far from all, and present as the memory of the beloved dead is.

As mile after mile carried me away from

the haunts of men, and the solitude and beauty of this incomparable river opened before me; my heart seemed to enlarge and warm within me, a longing for the companionship of a congenial soul came first imperceptibly, then like a gathering flood carrying all before it, overwhelming every feeling, and hurrying me on, so that I seemed to know no rest; and no doubt, much to the surprise of my boatmen I kept urging them onward, forgetful that they had no such goal as mine. And yet had I come thus far telling myself I was faithful to my false love, and that Lucy was only a friend. I hardly know what my answer would have been now. I never asked myself —better, perhaps, had I done so; happy for us both if I had never been tempted to make the fatal journey up the Wanganui. Alas! if we could lift the veil of futurity, how different should we act.

We are taught to say, and in desperation

we learn to believe, that the future is wisely hidden from us. That it is so, who dares doubt? For who would dare to live could he look upon the days of his life to come, as he looks upon those that have passed? Hope and uncertainty carry us on through trials the watching heart could never face. The strength given comes with them, and as our need is. Such is the will and wisdom of one who "doeth all things well," and causes "all things to work together for our good."

The day before I thought I might reach Mr. Gray's station the river began to rise, and soon came down in such a dark foaming torrent that we were compelled to land, and drag the boat high on the bank. There being only a short distance to the end of my journey, and knowing the flood would be sure to increase for twenty-four hours, I set off to walk the rest, leaving the natives

to follow me with the boat when the water permitted.

As I drew near the settlement my enthusiasm began to cool down, and a nervous anxiety take its place. Misgivings at the result of my visit arose. I tried to walk down these thoughts by a sharp spirt up a hill, much as a child gulps down a bitter dose, but it was no use, and as I sat down at the top to recover my breath, my despondency completely ran away with my reason, and I was on the point of turning and making my way back to the river, when the report of a rifle close beside me brought me to my senses and my feet. Yet, even as I stood there waving my cap and giving audible notice of my whereabouts, I was undetermined whether to go or turn.

"Mark!" shouted a voice from the dell below, the report of the rifle explaining the meaning of the cry. Then a flight of

ducks whirred past. Who could the sportsman be? what he was there was no question of the well-known "Mark" being redolent of Britain and British sports. I had not long to wait and wonder, the owner of the voice making himself visible almost immediately. As he clambered up the steep bank I had a pretty good opportunity of inspecting his outward man, and came to the conclusion that he was, firstly, a very new arrival, secondly, a thorough-going sportsman, and last, and of equal importance in the heterogeneous society one falls amongst in a new colony, a gentleman.

"I hope I didn't alarm you by my first shot?" he said, throwing himself down on the moss. "But you looked so cool and quiet perched up there, and it's such a novelty to come across a civilized being, that I could not resist the temptation of

seeing whether you were flesh and blood, or only an optical delusion."

"Had you been long looking on?" I asked, with a rather uncomfortable notion as to the gesticulations he might have witnessed.

"Why, yes, about ten minutes, I suppose, and thought you had gone to sleep until I saw you were spouting poetry or making a sermon. I beg your pardon, though; perhaps you are a clergyman; there's no telling what a fellow is in this miserable country.

"Set your mind at rest; I'm only a colonist."

"Looking for land—eh?"

"No, I'm on my way to a friend's house."

"Not Gray's station?" he inquired, sharply.

Then, as I answered in the affirmative, he began whistling, looking me over, as I thought, in rather a free and easy way for so new an acquaintance.

"Happen to know a gentleman rejoicing in the name of Martin Tobin?" he asked, getting on his legs, and pretending to be busy with his gun-lock. "Ah! you're he? I guessed as much; 'pon my honour I did. I thought my brain might be playing me a trick, and conjured you up—" he stopped short, and walked on. "Ah! I forgot—what a bear I am! a suckling colonist already," he added, in a low voice. "But it's all right, I suppose—eh? Mr. Tobin. You've been in these latitudes a considerable time; suppose we walk to Gray's together? unless you prefer solitary bliss, if so, say the word."

The reader may imagine our walk proved an amusing, and rather curious one. My

new acquaintance had, it appeared, been staying at the station for some weeks, and did not seem to be able to account either for his reason in staying, or its probable duration, and did not seem to like the subject much. It was dark when we reached the pah, and from thence to the station, nearly a mile of forest road, we had literally to grope our way, and once got so entangled as to be forced to light a piece of grass and make an impromptu torch. At last, however, we got to the cleared ground, and the bright lights of the settlement, and noisy greeting of the dogs, were by no means unwelcome.

"Does Mr. Gray know you are coming?" asked my companion as we approached the house.

"No," I replied, "I outstripped the messenger, so shall bring notice of my own arrival."

We were now at the porch. A bright light shone from the open window of the little sitting room, into which I glanced, hoping to get a glimpse of Lucy; but she was not there, and following my new comrade I entered. Mr. Gray was standing in the little hall.

"Why, who on earth—eh? Not Mr. Tobin?" he exclaimed, putting his face close to mine, and grasping my hand. "Bless my heart, Johnson, where did you fall in with each other? Dear me! Mary! Lucy, my dear! where are you all? Here's Martin Tobin come home with Johnson!"

And the good man ran on before into the kitchen, where I suppose he had just left his wife and Lucy.

The meeting so much thought of was soon over; how often is it not so! and

how often do we make our lives wretched by anticipation!

Lucy had not changed, except to grow prettier. The same frank, trustful glance, met my anxious eye—the same firm grasp of the hand greeted me.

"She's much better and happier, you see, Mr. Tobin," said Mrs. Gray, in a whisper, as we sat round the fire after supper.

"Yes, God bless her! she is," I replied, with an earnestness that seemed to startle the good woman, and I believe convinced her as she told me afterwards, for the first time that I cared for Lucy, and I saw her glance from one to the other of us several times. Then her eyes turned to their guest, whom I had now been formally introduced to by name. He was sitting by Lucy, his face turned towards her. I saw it at once, and a sharp pang

it cost me, which, however, vanished as quickly; for I thought I saw no answering light in her eyes except when they met mine.

The night was far advanced even when we arrived, and I had so much to answer, and so many things to tell both of English and colonial news, that I verily believe we should have seen the daylight in again had not Mr. Gray fallen into a dose and begun to snore pretty loud, thereby warning us in a manner not to be mistaken that people required sleep, even though the world moves on.

Alone, and in the silence of night, I began to turn over the events of the day, and wonder how Johnson had come there. What a handsome man he was, too; I could see that now, just the sort of man to win his way to a girl's heart, especially if bent

on doing so, and that he was in love with Lucy was as clear as possible. Did she know it? This unfortunate question, alas! for the weakness of man, kept me awake for the few remaining hours of the night, and when I fell asleep haunted me like a nightmare, tormenting me with horrible dreams, and bringing up all sorts of disagreeable suspicions in my heart.

I had not until now thought of losing Lucy, but had been taking it all for granted that I had only to ask. I saw another entered for the prize, and perfectly understood the challenge he had thrown in my face by his open attention to her that night. That I liked him all the better for it I will do myself the justice of saying, and having perfectly exonerated Lucy by the evidence I had seen, I could afford to pity him.

And so at last content with myself and the world, I turned away from the reproachful sunlight, and indulged in a most uncolonial luxury, a morning sleep.

CHAPTER XVII.

I FIND MYSELF A WIFE.

After breakfast Mr. Gray carried off Johnson upon what he called a sporting tour, namely, a visit to a pah about ten miles off, where there was good hog-shooting. Johnson, rather to my surprise, seemed anxious to get away. Soon after they were off Mrs. Gray disappeared, and Lucy and I, left to entertain each other, wandered down to the river side. The sun was hot enough to make the shade acceptable, so, finding a snug nook, where the fresh green moss

formed a lovely bank, and the thick foliage a natural bower, we took refuge.

Now, thought I, my hour has arrived. I must speak, or give up for ever. Such thoughts are by no means conducive either to ease of conduct or coolness, and after sitting perfectly silent for five or ten minutes I found myself more hopelessly confused than ever. It was no use looking to Lucy for courage. She sat pale and quiet, with her eyes fixed upon the dark stream, her thoughts far away recalling the terrible day that had left her in my charge. Poor girl! she thought a similar recollection was in my mind, for suddenly leaning forward she laid her hand upon my shoulder, and gazing into my face, with her eyes gleaming through tears, said—

"Do not regret the past, dear friend! they are happier now."

"Oh! Lucy, regret it!" I broke forth,

taking her hand, "regret the providence that gave me the right to care for you! Oh! my darling, I never knew that I loved you, but I know now, and must tell you, Lucy! Lucy! that I have only one wish, to make you my wife. Why do you start dear? have I frightened you with my abruptness? for heaven's sake do not look at me with such a scared face! I love you with my whole heart, and who can come between us?"

Pale and trembling, she had shrunk back as I began to speak; then, springing to her feet, tried to drag her hand out of mine; but I would not let it go, and stood beside her, literally supporting her. I had not understood her agitation, but as I had ceased speaking, and saw her pale, averted face, with its trembling lips and wild expression, for the first time the thought that Johnson had won my prize flashed upon me, and redoubled its value.

I dropped her hand, and was stepping back, when she threw her arms round me, sobbing—

"Oh! Martin, I am an ungrateful wretch! take me, love me, forgive me. I did not know till now—"

Did not know what? The question rose suspiciously to my lips, and happy would it have been if I had given it utterance; but I cast it indignantly away, and took the words literally, and concluded she meant she had not known I loved her, and whispered all my thanks, hopes, and happiness in her ear as she kept her face buried in my breast.

Presently she interrupted me, almost as if she had not been attending to one of my hundred promises.

"I thought you loved another, Martin; did you not?"

"My darling! was that the cause of your agitation?"

"Oh! no, no!" she exclaimed, eagerly; "Oh! no, no! I hoped—I mean I always thought—I—" here she again broke down, and began sobbing, while I, poor blind and conceited fool that I was, believed it was jealousy, and would hear nothing, stopping every attempt at explanation, telling her, why I hardly knew, except that I was a coward then, as many accepted lovers are when on the verge of happiness, telling her she was the first and only one, that I had never loved another, swearing in my passion that I had loved her all along. At first I saw she was incredulous, and fancied she required more evidence. I went over and over again the old ground, so that when I had done I had well-nigh persuaded myself that I had never really loved poor Miny, and that the days gone by were what I

had often tried in vain to think them *only a dream!*

"I should like to go up to the house, Martin," said Lucy, after a long time; "please let me go alone, indeed I should prefer it."

She was turning away, and had gone a few steps without looking at me, when, as if she felt she was acting unkindly, she turned and came back.

"Martin, I am a strange girl. You took me by surprise: but if you bear with me, with God's blessing and help, I'll make you a true and loving wife."

"God bless you, my darling, I know you will, far better than I deserve. There! run off, I see Mrs. Gray looking about; I dare say she thinks I've carried you off too long."

One more kiss, and a long loving look into the dark blue eyes, and I let her go, throwing myself down upon the bank to

dream over my happiness, and try to remember all I had said. No easy matter when passion unlooses the tongue.

Gradually as the excitement wore away, and my pulses cooled down, the true sense of my position came before me, and Miny's face, tearful and loving as I had seen it last, would rise in my mind's eye. Why should it haunt me now, when I knew she had played me false, and was most probably long ere this Frank Cary's bride. My heart grew heavy with the chill apprehension that creeps over us when evil is at hand, or the conviction of having taken an irretrievably false step, forces itself upon us.

I asked myself, bitterly, what was Miny to me, or I to Miny, now? But even then, when I had just been pouring forth vows of love, and the kiss of my betrothed was written on my lips, the hot tears rushed to my eyes, and clenching my hands, the mad

wish to meet Miny, and taunt her with her sin, rose in my heart.

For a long time I lay there, wrestling as it were with my evil genius, and perfectly oblivious to all that was passing. At last I looked up, my eyes hot with weeping, my lips dry and burning.

The sun was down, and the first grey mists of night were floating along the surface of the river. Silence and peace reigned triumphant, not a sound of life broke the solitude, nothing seemed to exist but my own wild passions rising darkly and reproachfully before me. Time passed by, and at last softened by the holy influence of the scene and stillness, I knelt, involuntarily breathing a prayer for peace and power to keep faith by the true heart I had won, my past sins and short comings rose in judgment against me, marshalling themselves side by

side, and with reproachful voices bidding me remember!

"God forgive me, and help me," was my prayer; and as I rose from my knees a new light seemed shining around me, the clear heavens sparkled with stars, and the tone of music came floating on the breeze. The music came from the settlement, and something in the touch drew me home to find Lucy surrounded by a band of little children leading their evening hymn. Silently she made room for me on the form beside her, and went on with the little service. The children came one by one when it was over, and shook hands, looking up at her with loving smiles. One little creature put up his rosy mouth to be kissed, and lisped out her name. Then we went into the house where Mrs. Gray was preparing supper for her husband and Mr. Johnson, neither of whom had returned. Lucy avoided speaking, but listened—I was

well nigh saying, patiently, to all I said, looking up with a smile now and then, when Mrs. Gray came bustling in. At last voices were heard, and in a few minutes our friends were in the room.

The instant they entered, I saw Johnson glance at Lucy; his eyes seemed to read her face, he grew deadly pale, and something like a suspicion flashed up as I saw her hands tremble, so that the work she held dropped upon her knee, where she seemed rather to let it lie idle, than by attempting to work betray her agitation.

And then as he came towards her, she rose and glided out of the room. His face flushed a deep crimson; and turning to the fireside, he threw himself into a chair, and leaning his face on his hands, remained gazing at the blazing logs until roused up to answer some question Mrs. Gray could not make out from her husband's explanation; and for the rest

of the night he talked incessantly, turning to the door way every few minutes, but Lucy appeared no more, pleading a headache.

And after the others had retired, I told Mr. Gray of my engagement to Lucy; no unexpected news, as it appeared, he having all along made up his mind that such would be, and was the most desirable consummation of events, and one which, under the peculiar circumstances, could scarcely fail to be the result.

Although more than once on the point of asking some information about Johnson, something always stopped me; so I said nothing: better so, I dare say. Mr. Gray was of a much too easy-going, matter-of-fact nature to see any romance on my part, and would probably have gone direct to his guest to ask an explanation. One thing he certainly agreed with me in, and that was, that our marriage should take place at once, and

then, if I wished it, "my wife"—how strange I felt when I called her so—"might remain at the settlement until I had a house ready. Of course that remained to be answered by Lucy herself."

"Have you any commands for Wellington, Mr. Tobin?" asked Johnson as he lounged up to me during the afternoon of the following day, with a cigar in his mouth; "for I start at day-break to morrow, and as your approaching felicity may detain you beyond your anticipations, it is possible I may be able to render myself of service; if so, pray consider me your humble servant.

There was something in the tone of his voice, as well as the wording of his elaborate address, that made me look rather closely in his face. What I saw there I cannot say. I could not define it then, nor can I do so now. The night before I had pitied him, as he sat brooding over the fire, pitied him, as I felt I

who had won could afford to do. Now I felt he pitied, and something very like, scorned me; though why, I had then little time or inclination to speculate upon. I took advantage of his offer thankfully enough, and, in the return for the trouble I was giving, supplied him with introductions to many of my friends, and a *carte blanche* to take up his quarters in my bachelor's hut.

With something very like a sneer, he thanked me, and turned away. Presently I saw him join Lucy as she sat at work in the garden, and then with her, stroll down towards the river, while I was taken prisoner by Mr. Gray, who having heard me hint at the murder I had been present at at the Otaki, wishing to get possession of the full particulars, for the purpose of forwarding them to the nearest missionary station, judging that after such an event, and while it was yet fresh on their minds, some sort

of religious impression might be made upon the white population, by far the most godless and worst to deal with in the colony, doing more to oppose and bring discredit upon the Christian's faith and life than the whole country put together.

I heard long afterwards that during the walk by the river, and almost at the same spot we had sat the preceding day, Johnson told Lucy of his love pretending to be completely ignorant of any engagement to me. And when in answer to his protestations and lastly reproaches for having kept him in ignorance, she told him she had not known of my attachment until the preceding day, he cleverly changed his method, and besought her not to let gratitude for my love entail misery upon herself. Then when startled by his insinuation, she turned upon him for an explanation, he feigned remorse. So well indeed did he plead, that he not

only convinced her of his love, but impressed her with the belief that she had acted dishonourably towards him, added to this the dreadful truth that he knew she loved him, although from some romantic notions of gratitude, she was sacrificing herself to me.

Poor Lucy! could I have known the heart-aches those sad smiles were hiding, or the weary nights that left that look, I blindly attributed to the depth of your feelings, in those dear eyes, I would rather have shot myself than asked you to be my wife, dearly as I was learning to love you; and that I did in my inmost and purest nature, love you dearly, you well knew.

Well! Johnson was gone; and for the fortnight preceding the day we had fixed for our wedding, I spent my time moving about with Mr. Gray, visiting several

pahs at a considerable distance, sometimes sleeping at them, but oftener preferring any length of walk, as long as it led me back to Lucy.

I have no intention of boring the reader with an account of my proceedings during this fortnight's probation, or the honeymoon that followed it. Indeed I've said more about love, and love-making already than I had the slightest intention of doing when I sat down to write my autobiography. But somehow, when I began retracing the past, my blood warmed up, and the bright faces, dear voices, and hearts that gladdened or saddened those long past years, would make themselves heard, seen, and felt. Page after page I've crossed out, torn up, or burnt. With them went many a sigh; but I have no wish in my old age to come before the world in the colours of the sunny past. Those I have loved, and those who

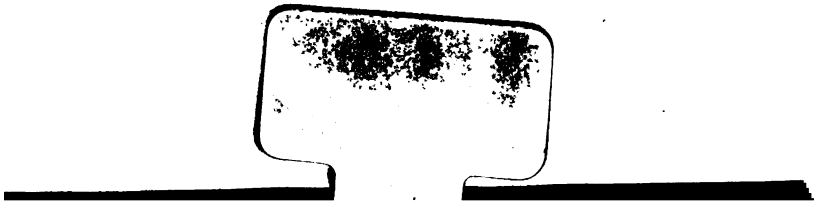
have loved me are gone, many are dead, some in far off lands, and some, God forgive us, are changed.

I wonder whether every one who is going to take upon him or herself the vows of matrimony, thinks as seriously about it as they are supposed to do, and certainly (could they lift the veil of futurity) ought to do. While I am writing up this, marriage has been brought before the English public in all sorts of shapes and forms. First, a year or two ago, the national voice of the *Times* thundered forth anathemas against any unlucky swain, who ventured to put his head into the noose, without he could vouch for a higher income than three hundred pounds a year. And in consequence, after shuddering over numbers of heartrending letters addressed ostensibly to the editor, but evidently from some despairing lover, who could not guarantee three hundred per

annum, in lieu of liberty, many a good industrious fellow gave up tea-parties at his chum's father's house, morning rides in the park, and dangerous boating parties on the river, and shutting himself up in a dark unwholesome room, in a miserable airless stifling back street, took to reading, smoking, and imbibing beer. But man is not made to live alone, and there are ladies to be met with, who don't expect you to marry them on anything at all, so the men comforted themselves, and avoided the folly stigmatized by mammas and the *Times*. Verily, I know at whose door must lie these sins. A summer, or two ago a new outcry was raised. The ladies "*who never expect a gentleman to marry them*," became the attraction of the parks. For a little time the stream flowed timidly and cautiously along. Nobody noticed, or at least professed to notice what was going on. The stained

and dirty current grew bolder, spreading itself amidst the old broad and clear river of society, until its identity was lost, and society was startled at what it had been doing. A few made a small effort to check the tide, but too late. The spring might be stopped, as, please God, English modesty and Christian principle will speedily do. But it will be many a long year before the taint is worn out. Remember, "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Our English maidens were once likened to the modest violet or rosebud; now what comparison do they aim at? And what would one of our "fast" young ladies (heaven save the mark) say if her admirer likened her to a violet. Fast young ladies are very amusing companions, I acknowledge. They have all the ease, and a good deal of the manner of fast young men, with just enough of the woman left to add the excitement of flirt-

ation to their companionship. They are uncommonly jolly in a cool conservatory after dinner, a gallop after supper, or a hundred similar ways. But few men would like to instal them as the one *par excellence*. "Oh! she's stunning at a ball," said a friend of mine lately, "but much too fast to marry. It's first-rate fun, you know; but we don't go too far."

END OF VOL. II.

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